

SEPTEMBER 1914

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



The great new Novel of New York
"Empty Pockets" by Rupert Hughes
begins in this issue



THE FORTUNE TELLER

"YOU—ALL SHO' IS GWINE A BE A GREAT MAN!"

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SEPTEMBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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MARY FULLER

Whose greatest film successes have been in
"Who Will Marry Mary?" "What
Happened to Mary," and "Dolly of the Dailies."

Photograph by Moody, New York



MARY PICKFORD

Of the bewitching smile and charming pout, who has been seen in such motion picture successes as "Tess of the Storm Country," "The Eagle's Mate," and "Hearts Adrift."



ALICE JOYCE

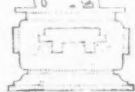
Leading woman who, without stage experience, was first given leading roles in the films because she was considered beautiful and she photographed well.



FLORENCE LAWRENCE

One of the veteran stars of the motion picture stage who is becoming more popular each year.

Photograph by Moody, New York





ADRIENNE KROELL

Who deserted the stage to become leading woman in a large Western film studio.



KATHLYN WILLIAMS

Who has appeared in numerous motion picture successes, notable among them being "The Adventures of Kathlyn."



ETHEL GRANDIN

A former actress of the legitimate stage
whose first motion picture success was in
"Traffic in Souls."

Photograph by Unity Photo Co., New York



FLORENCE LA BADIE

A film favorite in "The Star of Bethlehem,"
"Cymbeline," "The Million-Dollar
Mystery," and other photo-plays.

Photograph by Bangs, New York



WINIFRED GREENWOOD
One of the rapidly-rising stars of the screen.



ANITA STEWART

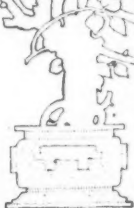
A nineteen-year-old Brooklyn girl who has sprung to the fore in the films, among her well-known plays being, "The Wood Violet" and "Prince of Evil."



HELEN HOLMES

Who forsook the legitimate stage to become
a star of the films.

Photograph by Maraville, Glendale, Cal.





MARION LEONARD

Whose dramatic skill is best shown, perhaps, in the six-reel photo-play, "The Seed of the Fathers."



"There," he said, with tears of pride and joy in his eyes, "what did I tell you, sir? Notoriety is all Miss Deloraine needed to make her famous."

Drawn by Frederick R. Gruger to illustrate "The Hare of March,"
The first of the new series of Red Book stories by the noted English dramatist
JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY

September
1914

THE
REDBOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXIII
No 5

RAY LONG, Editor

EMPTY POCKETS

a new novel of New York

By **Rupert Hughes**

America's Foremost Author

With Sketched-on-the-scene

Illustrations by

James Montgomery Flagg

America's Foremost Illustrator

52 52 52

begins on
the next page

52 52 52

This is a bigger, more fascinating, more important novel even than Mr. Hughes' story of modern New York, "What Will People Say?" It will "get" you as only about one novel does in a life-time.



Aphra Shaler,
the little pig
who brought
herself to the
New York mar-
ket.

EMPTY

A NOVEL of

By Rupert Hughes

*AUTHOR of "Miss 318," "The Old Nest,"
"Canavan," "The Real New York" and "Daugh-
ters of Shiloh," of the play "Excuse Me," and of that
most powerful novel in years, "What Will People Say?"*

THE exquisite Mr. Merithew, the amused and amusing millionaire, the ingenious contriver of quaint diversions, the walking fashion plate, the jester who moved familiarly among the eminent, tweaked the ladies' ears and plucked the ermine of the railroad presidents; whose doings were read about with adoration by the enormous vulgarity that devours the society pages and outsnobs the snobs—this Mr. Merithew had seen nearly all of the best and worst of the world except the slums of New York. The slums of other cities are picturesque, he found; servile, full of beggars. He was not responsible for their slums. With his almost womanly intuition he felt that he would feel disturbed if he inspected the pauperdom of New York. He always said when he was invited to visit the lower East Side:

"No, thanks! It's the last place on earth where you'll ever find me."

And it was. He was found there, dead.

The smile that had won him the name of "Merry Perry" was fixed as plaster of Paris after it has set. The foppery that had been a national proverb, was stained with the rust of tin; it was disheveled and crimson from his wounds.

There were people who pretended to be surprised that Merry Perry did not bleed blue. They would not take him seriously even then. He had been the joke

of New York: and New York had been his.

"To him that hath!" While millions of honorable and industrious people were fighting for enough to eat and a corner to sleep in, three fortunes had been Perry Merithew's inheritance. When he squandered one, another was provided. They had not sufficed him for his own whims. How could he have had any alms left for the poor? Especially as he did not like the poor. He had done nothing for them except to give them a little laughter at his magnificent flippancies, and to confirm them in one of the few luxurious vices of the poor, which is their open contempt for the wealthy, their belief that the rich have no rights to their riches, and that all rich people are bad. The poor have almost always had more contempt for the rich than from them; for pity does not mollify their disdain.

Merry Perry had not approved of the poor any more than they of him. He had fled from them because he believed them to be dirty, disorderly, ugly and dismal; and he hated dirt; he loathed disorder and ungrace and he abominated sorrow.

And now, as if Fate had grinned and spat upon him at last, his deathbed was the sun-blistered roof of a repulsive tenement in the most crowded square mile on the face of the earth.

A woman found him. A woman whose

POCKETS

NEW YORK

Illustrated by
James Montgomery Flagg

THIS is the novel of New York which every American will want to read: the real story of the inside and outside of the old town, by the man who knows it and tells of it better than any living writer.



Maryla, the girl who got to New York in the way the humorists say no one ever does, by being born there.

frowsy, graceless, unkempt, unclean appearance would have made him recoil from her, recoiled from him. Her ancestors, compelled by their German persecutors to select a new family name, had gracefully chosen "spray of roses;" but Mrs. Rosenzweig did not live down to her patronym. It was amazing how fat she got on so little to eat. It was regrettable that she could not afford to buy what she could so ill afford to do without—corsets.

Her home was two crowded rooms in a dismal tenement facing on Orchard Street near its crossing with Stanton.

It was a tall tenement, and the rickety stairs hardly supported her as she squeezed, panting, to their top and emerged, pushing a wash basket far ahead of her. Her mouth was full of clothespins and her gaze was upward to avoid collision with the web of wash lines. She saw that her own rope had been cut by some marauder and started forward with a muffled grunt of anger.

It was then that she discovered Perry Merithew, fell over his legs and sprawled on all fours across the creaking basket. She must have looked like some uncouth animal as she turned to stare, then shuddered back, emitting shrieks and clothespins.

Perry Merithew lay between her and the pent-house door. She howled for somebody to come and take him away;

but it was the busiest hour of the market war in the street below, and most of the men were out selling what most of the women were out buying. Even up here, the racket occasioned by the gradual transfer of the contents of the push-carts into the black leather market-bags had the sound of a surf where sea gulls scream and quarrel.

The roof, too, was enclosed by walls, and no one heard or heeded Mrs. Rosenzweig and her burly terror. She had to work her way unaided around the grewsome Mr. Merithew. She kept her eyes on him as if he might jump at her. The grip of life-long penury was evident in the automatic groping of her hands for every last one of her clothespins, before she dragged herself and her basket backward through the pent-house door.

Thence she stumbled down the stairs to her own room, where two of her children were. The other children and the husband and the boarder who shared the two-room suite were absent. First, Mrs. Rosenzweig called for a glass of water and mumbled it and choked before she could explain that she had seen the work of the Angel of Death. She sent her boy Herman to fetch a policeman at once.

Herman, who was born in America, and had imbibed liberty and impudence with his milk, told his mother "Ah, go on!" Then he ran up to the roof and

gazed a long while at the interesting stranger. Then he ran back and told his sister Lillie that there was a "swell stiff upstairs."

Lillie called him a liar and ran up as he ran down.

WHEN Officer Monahan ploughed his way through the market riot and attained the roof, he found a crowd already gathered in a staring circle like a pack of coyotes round a cowboy sleeping by a fire. Nobody knew who the man was. His fame had not extended into this realm. Monahan would have called him a plain drunk, but for the red and the white and the breathlessness.

Other policemen arrived, fighting their way up the jammed staircase. They were not long in deciding that it was a case of robbery ornamented with assassination. There were no identifying cards or letters, but a pocket-book was found empty; a watch chain dangled watchless, and there were indications that a scarf-pin had been hastily removed from the scarf. There were no coins in the pockets. While they were wondering who he was and debating whether or not to remove the body before the coroner was summoned, two reporters appeared.

Mr. Merithew was in the hands of the public. His first epitaph would be headlines.

The reporters had chanced to be passing through the jumbled masses of Rivington Street in search of another "story," when they saw the crowds thickening like ants around the door of the Orchard Street passageway. Orchard Street in the forenoon ordinarily resembles a panic in a crowded theatre, but the reporters bucked the meek throng and wedged through.

The taller of them was a handsome young fellow named Raeburn—not long escaped from Harvard. The other was brindle in color, with half of one eyebrow missing; his college had been the streets of New York. His name was Hallard. At present he was drawing money from the *Gazette* and giving it the ruthless loyalty of a mercenary soldier. Raeburn was still young enough to suffer from horror and pity, and things like

that. Hallard was as sophisticated as an ambulance surgeon.

Hallard called the policemen by name. He knew nearly everybody by name. As soon as he had bent forward over the unknown and unknowing center of attraction, he called him too by name:

"Merry Perry Merithew. Well, I'll be—"

He did not finish his prophecy, for he noted that Merithew's hands were clenched; from between all his knuckles protruded wisps of hair, a woman's hair, hair of the color they call burnt sienna.

II

HALLARD'S first emotion was the joy of a prospector hoping for a nugget and finding a bonanza. He realized instantly that he had stumbled on a story of front-page, right-hand-column dignity, with eight-column scare head-lines. Merry Merithew had always been pay-dirt, but now at space-rates he would weigh in every day for weeks, perhaps for months. With a stubborn murderer well-lawyered, a good long trial and several appeals and reversals, he might hold out for years. Hallard's only regret was that a man from another paper had happened on the same lode. But Raeburn was young and not quite news-broken and was already feeling regret instead of rejoicing.

Raeburn was shaking his head: "Poor fellow! And think of his family. His mother's alive, maybe. And his wife—has he a wife?"

"He has one official wife," Hallard answered, "but he was the busy little humming-bird of the village. There'll be some flutter in the rose-garden when this gets out—some flutter, believe me!"



Raeburn was still elegaic: "But to think of his being killed!"

Hallard's amazement was: "Ah, that's been comin' to him a long while. The funny thing is his being found in a place like this, dead or alive." The word "funny" had come to have a technical meaning in Hallard's lexicon. It was almost incredible to him that Perry Merithew should be here.

Abruptly he recalled the fact that he was first and foremost a newspaper man, and it was his duty to give this news its début in the *Gazette*. He said to Raeburn:

"Queer that nobody saw this thing done. While I'm rummaging round here you might look over that ledge and see if any windows command the roof. He might have been shot from some other roof."

"That's so," said Raeburn and wormed his way through the crowd, while Hallard, glancing about among the stolid faces, selected the alert-eyed little Herman Rosenzweig as the only available messenger. Hallard, reporter-like, usually had his coat pocket a-bulge with newspapers. He scribbled on the margin of one of them the telephone number of the *Gazette* and the street number of the tenement. Then he printed in large letters:

CITY EDITOR, *Gazette*:

Merry Perry Merithew found here on roof, murdered by unknown beauty with copper-colored hair. Send every man you can spare and artists. Big scoop if you rush extra.

HALLARD.

He gave the boy a quarter to take the note to the nearest drug store on Forsythe Street and have Mr. Pytlik telephone the message. He promised Herman more if he returned with the answer.



Herman flashed away like a carrier pigeon released, and Hallard resumed his search.

He had called the unknown woman beautiful for three reasons: in the first place, all women who get into the newspapers are beautiful; in the second place, Perry Merithew was addicted to beautiful women; in the third place, Hallard felt somehow the artistic necessity for having her beautiful.

He felt rather proud of that word "copper-colored," too. He had chosen it hastily, for its sinister note. The color was safe, for copper is of all sorts of colors, but he intended to work in some allusion to the copperhead, that silent, slimy horror that strikes without the alleged warning of a rattlesnake; lurks under flowers and among autumn leaves, murders the innocent and vanishes without noise or trace. Hallard thanked the fair assassin for leaving him such inspiring documents. He could visualize the struggle of the revengeful woman stabbing or shooting the man. He would shortly write the very words she had said, and describe them as overheard by neighbors. But first he must have a theory to work on. The police would not let him examine the body to see the nature of the wounds so abundantly advertised in red. He was resolved at least to obtain a bit of that hair. He stooped down, laid hold of one of the strands and gave it a little tug.

"He won't let go!" he said.

Officer Monahan grasped Hallard's collar and dragged him back, commanding him to "come along out of that." But Hallard brought away unbeknownst a few threads. They curled about his finger till he could transfer them to his pocketbook unobserved.

"Whoever she was, she had red hair and—" Once more he eluded Monahan long enough to bend forward for another look. "And it wasn't pulled out. It was cut off!"

HALLARD'S action had attracted all eyes to the eight little auburn skeins protruding from the cold clench of those hands. Hallard glanced about among the crowd. Others imitated him. The women were all bareheaded or only partly



Merry Perry Merithew always said when he was invited to visit the lower East Side: "No thanks! It's the last place whose frowsy, graceless, unkempt, unclean appearance would have made him recoil from her, recoiled from him. She saw that her own rope had been cut, and started forward with a muffled grunt of anger. It was then



on earth where you'll ever find me." And it was. He was found there, dead. A woman found him. A woman Her mouth was full of clothespins and her gaze had been upward to avoid collisions with the web of wash lines, that she discovered Perry Merithew, fell over his legs and sprawled across the creaking basket.

coiffed with knitted shawls. They were all black-haired or brown, save one—a young woman of almost Turkish mien. Her hair was red. Every gaze fastened on her. She understood, gasped, flushed, started to escape. The press was too close.

Hallard put his hand on her arm. Monahan seized the other. She flinched away. Then with a sudden desperation, she broke out into exclamations of some gibberish nobody understood. But her deed was eloquent. She whipped from her heavy locks a gaudy comb and a few pins and shook her hair out like a flame. Then she bent her head for the inspection of who so wished. She ran her fingers about her blazing scalp and it was evident that no knife or scissors had ever worked mischief there.

Hallard with the franchise of his calling dared to make sure. He put his hand upon her head and she leaped back in scarlet shame, with a little cry of distress. He had snapped off three or four hairs!

The outraged woman appealed to the others volubly, but they seemed not to understand her any more than Hallard did. And not understanding her, they laughed at her. Hallard had picked up a little of the Yiddish dialect in the course of his wanderings about the many worlds of New York. He tried it on the girl but she made no answer.

Mrs. Rosenzweig, who had returned now and assumed a sort of proprietorship over the mystery, explained:

"Her? She don't speak Yiddish. She's a Oriental, just come over from Turkey. She belongs by a family named Abravaya. Spanish, she speaks, could you talk it, *nu*."

Hallard had a little knowledge of many languages and he made humble apologies in cigar-maker's Cuban. But the girl retreated from him still, though her wild eyes showed that she understood.

A young man came eel-like through the crowd now. He was of fair hair and skin, rather Hibernian than Hebraic—at least he resembled those Irish who resemble the Spanish. To him the young girl ran for refuge. What she told him angered him and he glared at Hallard.

Hallard was used to being glared at. He began again in laborious Spanish. The young man answered in English.

"For why you pull my wife by the hair, huh? You theenk she is know thees man? No! She knows nobody. She is my wife."

Hallard tried to explain. But he did not confess that he had purloined a lock and for no sentimental reasons. He was of the school of newspaperdom that usurps the functions of the police and the detective bureaus, and solves some of the mysteries that baffle the regular departments.

The police and the public are afraid of these reporters, for they are weaponed with the terrible engines of publicity. They can make a patrolman famous or an inspector ridiculous. They hazard a guess and print it as a clue. In place of hiding what they know, they advertise their theories as facts, and thus question all their readers. In one day they can reveal portraits and possibilities to millions of eyes; and thereby sometimes some one is reminded of an incident that furnishes a bit of further information. And thus they set upon the trail of the guilty a pack of countless sleuths.

HALLARD was sure that some extraordinary reason had brought this fashionable gentleman to this most impolite place. A woman had plainly been with him at the last moment. Apparently there had been a struggle. He had clutched her by the hair; she had killed him, cut herself free and fled.

It was most probable that she belonged in this neighborhood. Otherwise, why should Merithew have come here? Surely if she belonged uptown, she would never have selected this hideous trysting place. Such a tragedy involving two paupers would be worth hardly a "stickful" of type: involving a man like Merithew, it meant columns upon columns, whether the missing woman were rich or poor. Hallard could hardly decide which he wanted her to be.

He had found nearly everything possible to human crime, and infinite variety in human folly. He had also learned that wickedness usually does what charity is advised to do; it begins at home.

The most natural thing to suppose was that Merithew had come here on some insane excursion of his jaded fancy to meet the woman whose hair he held. The heat of the night must have driven them to the roof as it had driven hundreds of thousands of people from the ovens indoors.

Some quarrel had arisen; the woman had knifed Merithew, or shot him or somehow executed him. In these days of exploding tires a sound like a pistol shot attracts no attention at all. In this region, even the cry of "Police!" usually fails to bring anyone running, least of all a policeman. Hallard could imagine what supreme horror must have been the woman's as she sawed her head free, leaving these clues behind for those grim hands to proffer posthumously. Who was she? Whence come? Whither a fugitive?

If the hair had been black it would have been of small help in a district where brunettes moved about in throngs. But hair of a reddish persuasion was conspicuously rare here.

It was Hallard's desire to beat the police to the solution—for the glory of his paper, though his own ingenuity would remain anonymous. His work would be so impersonal that the highest flight of egotism would be an occasional allusion to himself as "a reporter of the *Gazette*."

MEANWHILE Raeburn had returned without discoveries; he began to eavesdrop on the police and the detectives, who were coming up with speed, and making examinations, peering for finger or foot prints, taking measurements, snapshots. Hallard was resolving to leave the scene to the other reporters and the photographers. They were already on their way, according to Herman, who returned with commercial promptitude.

Hallard decided to search the neighborhood. Failing there, he would ransack Merithew's own past.

He made a last hasty survey of the theatre of the crime, if crime it was—the ambulance surgeon had not yet arrived, though the gong could be heard in the street below faintly, like a passing

bell. The surgeon could tell how Merithew died, and how long ago. Meanwhile Hallard studied the place. The roof was so broken up with tanks, chimneys and skylights that there was little free room. A wall built up around the ledge cut off the view of the surrounding roofs. Hallard found an old box lying against the wall. He set it up and stood on it while he peered over.

The view was too familiar to excite his wonder. It was the enormous multiplication of poverty, a festival of squalor. Everywhere there were clotheslines with their drooping pennants of defeat. They filled the fire escapes. On the window-sills the bedclothes hung or pillows were heaped, or mattresses; or the denizens leaned out gazing into the busy streets.

The very effort toward cleanliness was the emphasis of its absence. Poor people's underclothes washed without pride by unpaid wives disgusted at their fabrics and hating their tasks—where could one find a less pleasant sight?

From this eyrie one could see many roofs but could be seen from few. Hallard decided that there probably had been no witnesses to the deed. If the man or the woman had made an outcry, however, somebody should have been alarmed. How had a man dressed as well as Merithew always was, entered such a place without incurring notice? How had the guilty woman slipped away unheeded?

As Hallard slid his fingers along the top of the wall, they fell on something. Without looking or starting he closed his palm upon it. His hand studied it, recognized it for a hat-pin with an ornate head of odd shape. Before he dropped down he slipped it into the lining of his coat.

The surgeon appeared now and busied himself with the cadaver. He announced first that the death must have occurred many hours before. There were cuts upon the hands. There was a wound in the back of the head that might have been made with a sharp-edged instrument, with a brick, or with the common gas-pipe of footpad commerce. There was no bullet or knife or needle wound upon the body.

The identity of the vanished woman remained to be solved. The detectives hoped to gain some ground in her pursuit by the chemical and microscopical study of the structure of her hair. But they were already in dispute as to its color. One said "red;" one said "auburn;" one said "golden." Hallard mentioned his own opinion and pointed out the value of "copper-haired." It was a good word, and thereafter the police and everybody used it. The unknown was almost invariably referred to as "the copper-haired woman."

By this time the police had herded the crowd from the roof. The thick-footed, thick-headed guardians of the peace were trying to look superhumanly intelligent as they peered and pried. Hallard sneered at them and left them to their perplexities.

Taking care of the dead was for undertakers and newspaper cubs or journeymen. The things that Hallard wanted to know were the things that some living woman was terribly eager to keep secret.

CHAPTER II

AS he went down the steps, already writing his story on the tablets of his memory, Hallard pushed his way through an almost solid agglutination of people. He did not see the red-headed woman, so he sought her home, and knocked at the door. The young man with the Hiberno-Hebraic features appeared. Hallard was not used to being invited in or kept out. He sauntered forward and Mr. Abravaya had either to close the door in his face or be walked over. The former did not suit his courtesy or the latter his pride. He stepped back and Hallard marched into a room that was cleaner than he had expected. There were a few little flowers bravely growing in tin cans.

The red-headed girl, who was nursing a tiny baby, fled to the kitchen. Mr. Abravaya drew forward a chair and bowed Hallard into it with a gracious ceremony. Then he called something through the kitchen door and sat down on the bed, waiting for his visitor to state his business. Hallard knew better

than to begin at once on the purpose of his errand:

"You speak English, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Abravaya—Behor Josef Abravaya, sir. Yes. I spik Enngleesh pretty good. I am only seex mawnth in thees kantry, but I spik Enngleesh pretty good. I spik seven language. In Constantinople where I am come from, a man must spik much language."

"You come from Constantinople?" said Hallard. "But they told me you were Spanish."

"Four—five hondred years ago my people are in Spain, but they are so pairsecute they go by Toorkey. They spik the Spanish—a kind of Spanish—Ladino we call him."

"That's very interesting," said Hallard without interest. "And does your wife speak English too?"

"No—my wife spiks only the Ladino. She onderstands not even the Yiddish. She knows hardly the people here. We Oriental Jews are a separated people among our own people."

The red-headed woman entered now from the kitchen. She had quieted the baby somehow and she carried in its stead a little tray with two small cups of almost solid black coffee, and a dish of pasties.

"My wife," was Mr. Abravaya's introduction. "Sarah, thees is Mr.—Mr.—"

"Hallard," said Hallard, rising and bowing. Sarah hardly nodded and did not raise her eyes. She thrust the tray forward meekly.

Abravaya waved the coffee toward Hallard with a gesture of Arabian hospitality. This room was his tent, even though it was pitched four flights in air. Hallard was his guest, though he had forced his way in.

Hallard questioned Abravaya, adroitly, commenting on the unfortunate discovery on the roof. He asked if they had not heard some noise on the roof during the night. Had they not visited the roof themselves to escape from the heat?

Abravaya explained that the roof was too cut up to serve as a dormitory. It was doubly enclosed by its own walls and by the walls of the surrounding tenements. No one slept there of nights. He



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACC

Muriel Schuyler could run her own car, and her exploits with her motor-boat were terrifying to behold. Such flirtations as she had indulged in were hardly more than experiments in comradeship. She had known as little of sorrow or poverty, of toil or love or vice or crime, as a girl could know who has eyes and ears and can read or listen. She had never encountered death or despair or passion.

himself and his wife had spent the night on the fish-block of a small market on Orchard Street.

Then, Hallard suggested, they ought to have noticed the arrival of Merithew. He was a man whose costume excited attention on Fifth Avenue; how not on Orchard Street? Abravaya described the crowded state of the street at night. So many people came and went; there was such a stir of restless wretches shifting their places or their positions that heavy eyes paid little heed to what shadowy figures slunk about.

An automobile would have attracted instant notice. No car or carriage had visited the street.

It occurred to Hallard that Merithew himself would have done what he could to avoid attention. But how could he have found his way hither without asking questions? The woman must have brought him—guided him, perhaps, on some made-up errand in order that she might rob him. But robbery might not have been the whole motive. Blackmail might have been the object—or revenge—a woman's revenge with a pretense of robbery to disguise the crime. This theory appealed to Hallard: it made good newspaper material. He was going to "sling himself" in a description of the emotions the woman of mystery felt when she felt the hideous closing of those fingers on her hair.

Always he came back to that hair. He asked if his host knew any neighbor whose tresses were of that hue. Abravaya was sure that his wife was the only possessor of such a treasure. He spoke to her. He translated her answer:

"Sarah my wife says she has seen no hair like those since Maryla Sokalska is move away."

"Maryla Sokalska?" Hallard answered. "When did she move? Where? Why?"

Abravaya translated his English into Ladino, and Sarah's answer into English:

"Sarah my wife says it is not of her business. She did see her go. She cried when she goed."

Hallard talked of other things, then made his exit with an effort at ceremonial.

THE narrow, dark and dingy halls were still packed. Little Herman was not far away. He took pride if not profit from leading Hallard down a flight of stairs to the door of the Sokalska's.

Hallard knocked, and a venerable man with the beard of a prophet and the eyes of a *Lear* opened the door. He bowed when Hallard named him. Inside the room there were sewing machines whirring.

"Does Miss Maryla Sokalska live here?"

The old man's questioning eyes filled with the tragic fire of an Ezekiel. His lean hand went into his beard. He shook his head. The sewing machines stopped as if they too were listening.

"Can you tell me where she lives?"

The ancient closed his eyes and answered huskily:

"We know her not. To us—she is—dead. We have made a mourning for seven days, in our house, and have slashed our coat. She is living no longair."

Hallard had heard that some of the orthodox Jews in the rare instances where their daughters brought disgrace upon the home, turned them forth into the wilderness like scapegoats, and counted them as buried.

Another man might have lifted his hat and turned aside in respect to such misery, but Hallard's business was the publication of the things that break the hearts and the prides of families. He spoke with much deference:

"Do you happen to know if—if your daughter knew a Mr. Merithew?"

The name seemed to have the effect of a poison in the old man's ears. His grief turned to hatred. He gnashed his teeth. His beard wagged with fury. He made haste to close the door.

Hallard tapped; it was not opened. He tried the knob; it was locked. He called through; there was no answer.

HALLARD used to say: "The only thing that gives me the nerve to ask people some of the questions I do is the fact that people haven't got self respect enough to kick me out."

Hallard did not blush at the rebuff

he had had. His eyes were kindled with encouragement. In the tenement where Perry Merithew was found he had discovered a family to whom the name of Perry Merithew was an abomination.

His next step was to find Maryla Sokalska. He was sure that he was a lap or two ahead of the detectives or the other reporters. So many roads to take, so many things to do occurred to his brain, that he wished he were a hundred men instead of hardly more than one.

Before he took up his new path, he hurried over to the Bowery. At a corner news-stand the dealer was just opening the bundles of the latest extras. Hallard bought one of each. None of them had a word of Merithew. Up the wide Avenue came a low, rakish motor-truck at furious speed. It was a *Gazette* delivery car. The men, knee deep in bundles, threw one off to the dealer.

Hallard cut the string himself, and slapped the paper open. Across the top of the front page in letters two inches tall and as red as gore was the legend:

MERITHEW MURDERED

In black letters only an inch tall and dwindling line by line, he read:

COPPER-HAIRED BEAUTY SLAYS SOCIETY'S PET

Body of "Merry Perry" Merithew,
Multi-Millionaire, Found
on Slum Roof.

The resourceful city editor, Mr. Ulery, had turned up the matrix of a large portrait of Merry Perry in the fanciful costume of a Sultan. He had ordered the material of the obituary department into linotype while the block letters of the headlines were being set up. To make room for the sensation, he had cast out bodily three or four items of world-wide importance. Altogether, the *Gazette* special extra treated Merithew handsomely.

Hallard felt reassured. He had scored a great "beat." It was a huge joke on the other papers. They would have to steal their news from the *Gazette* this time. To-morrow the *Gazette* would crow

over them and reproduce their Merithew-less headlines.

Hallard hurried to a booth to dictate a masterpiece of information over the telephone. Since Ulery had done so well and so promptly by the first scant message, what wouldn't he do when he learned of the Sokalska who had sinned to banishment and been mourned as dead? Hallard suggested to Ulery a number of more prominent names that might be linked with Merithew's, and advised the release of further news-beagles in all directions.

He and the city editor exchanged exclamations of rapture over the nice, bluggy nature of the event. They were artists in their way, and they were beginning a gorgeous fresco.

If a citizen of the Dark Ages could be wakened from his centuries of sleep he would marvel somewhat at our tall buildings—though they had pretty tall buildings then—but he would wonder more at our enormous improvement in the machinery of gossip.

If he had seen the brindled Hallard steal into a booth like a confessional, and by whispering into a little rubber cup summon the tormenting imps of publicity to their tasks, and set free the roaring dragons of the presses, the revenant would have marveled indeed. But he would have sworn that he saw horns on Hallard's forehead; he would have sniffed brimstone, and he would have crossed himself.

CHAPTER III

TO find Maryla Sokalska was Hallard's next chore. He was about to plunge back into the region where she had lived, but it occurred to him that since her father's home had been closed against her she would hardly have lingered in the neighborhood.

Hallard could not imagine why she should have brought Merithew down here, even to rob him. But motives were not his affair; they were important to God and the juries, not to a reporter. His traffic was in deeds.

Hallard reasoned that the best place to begin back-tracking Miss Sokalska



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

While the maid was gaping at him like a mask of onyx and ivory, Hallard knelt on Aphra's suit-case and snapped the catches. He swore internally; she had on a hat and a motor veil that completely swathed her locks. "Whatcha want?" "Don't you remember me?" Hallard asked



for her. Aphra stared at him as if he were a genie just bubbled out of a bottle. He stared at her to make sure of that hair. She demanded with immediate wrath: "How did you get in here? Who are you, anyway?" with infantile surprise. "I wrote a lovely story about you once."

was from the latest trail of Mr. Merithew.

Perhaps the news of his death had not yet broken like a thunderbolt across his home. The *Gazette* wagons would hardly yet have reached so far north as the granite residence on Central Park East, where the "Seeing New York" lecturers always megaphoned their pop-eyed flocks:

"On your right—the handsome residence of Mr. Parry Marithoo, the famous *bono vivong*."

Some one downtown buying the *Gazette* and learning the truth might have telephoned to Mrs. Merithew—but perhaps not yet. Some one certainly would at any moment. Hallard looked up the private number in his memorandum book and dropped another nickel in the slot. When the connection was made, he asked for Mr. Merithew. A man's voice answered:

"He's not a tome, sir."

There was a footmanlike intonation in the answer and no indication of tragedy. Hallard asked for Mrs. Merithew, and managed to elicit a hint that she was at a committee meeting in the Charities Building. Hallard said:

"Well, can't you tell me where I'll find Perry—er—Mr. Merithew? It's extremely important."

The apparent slip into the familiar first name was as effective with the footman as a letter of introduction.

"Sorry, sir, I can't say. But if you'd please to keep the line a moment I'll switch you onto his man."

The clutter of the telephone evoked another voice to which the footman's voice said: "A friend of the master's is inquiring where he could be found. It's important."

Then the valet's voice, full of hand-rubbing obsequiousness:

"I've had no word from him since yesterday, seh. He's not supposed to be in town now, seh. I fancy he may have stopped aboard some friend's yacht last night, or at the Piping Rock Club, per'aps. He's not likely to dine a tome

either, I believe. Any message, seh?"

Hallard did not tell the valet that Mr. Merithew would certainly not dine at home; and probably would not even sup in Paradise. He lowered his voice confidentially:

"Well, I'll tell you. I'm Mr. Brown, the jeweler, and Mr. Merithew ordered me to make a bracelet for—for Miss Maryla Sokalska, you know. I was to deliver it to her. But I've lost the address he gave me. Where can I find her?"

The valet's gasp was audible; his indignation was manifest: "Miss Sokalska, seh? I didn't know as we had seen 'ide nor 'air of 'er these three months past. I haven't an idea of her whereabouts, seh, if she has any."

THIS was discouraging. Hallard hung up the receiver and hurried from the booth to the subway station at Bleecker Street. Nearly everybody on the uptown train was reading the *Gazette's* exclusive story. Persons who had bought other papers were more or less openly filching the news from those who held *Gazettes* in their hands. Some of the owners of *Gazettes* were jealously endeavoring to fold up their treasure from the public eye. Others were waiting till those over-shoulder had finished before they turned the page.

Thus character makes itself known incessantly—infinitesimally. Peoples' souls fairly perspire from them. The miser picks up the discarded newspaper and hugs it with automatic stinginess while the spendthrift scatters his extra to the winds. The snooper neglects his own comic page to read his neighbor's editorial; the snob closes his eyes against the headlines the straphanger rubs against his very nose.

Hallard gloated upon the success of his story like an author who sees his book in many hands. He promised the public an exciting serial in daily installments.

He left the train at Twenty-third Street and hastened round the corner to the United Charities Building. Here he

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"You're in love with my wife, aren't you, Alan?"

The Shrimp

By Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "Whose Wife?" "The Turnkey," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. HENRY BRACKER

HE was a shrimp physically, but a giant mentally and a demon in love—the man around whom revolves the latest story from this brilliant writer.

THE Shrimp upset the boat. It was by far the most natural—in fact, the only possible—climax when, sailing before a half-gale, he had "come about" with a single twist of the tiller and a simultaneous yank of the sheet. The flattened sail stood athwart the wind. There could be but one result.

The good little fourteen-foot cat-boat, unused to such vile treatment, had re-

sented it by throwing herself down flat on the lake's face, like an angry child, and, in the same gesture, tossing the Shrimp's hundred-and-ten-pound weight and five feet, three inches, of stature lightly out into the water.

The Shrimp came up a full ten feet from the capsized cat-boat. And the Shrimp could not swim.

To his credit, he did not thrash about and at once absorb more water than the

first involuntary gasp had introduced into his system. Instead, he flopped awkwardly over on his back and with absurd yet creditably slow gestures began to move his hands and feet. He had read somewhere that this was the correct thing to do.

As a matter of fact, the Shrimp was in no grave peril. The boat had overturned a bare fifty yards from shore. Yet the woman on the rocks, at sight of the mishap, had cried out involuntarily in fear; and had sprung to her feet, urged by the world-old, hereditary instinct to face peril standing.

The man who lounged beside her rose more slowly, with the lithe laziness of perfect strength, towering a head and neck above her, though she was tall.

"Oh Lord!" he groaned in mock despair. "He's at it again. We ought to tether him. Don't worry, Hera. I'll fish him out."

As he spoke he was moving to the rocks' edge. And at the last word he dived, not so much as waiting to kick off his moccasins. His head, its tumbled yellow hair abnormally sleek and glistening, came to the surface, a second later. With long, unhurried strokes, swimming on his side, his face half-submerged, he rapidly overhauled the Shrimp.

The latter, meantime, was learning that for a non-swimmer to keep afloat, lying on his back in deep water, by the seemingly simple expedient of moving hands and feet, is less easy in practice than on paper. Thrice, try as he would to prevent it, he had shipped strangling gulps of lake. And once his head had gone clean under—a mere nothing for a man who can swim, but a moment of delicious horror for one who cannot.

Nevertheless, the century of battling came to an end at last. A hand gripped a wet collar; the immersed head was jerked above the surface, and a laughing yet annoyed face appeared very close to the Shrimp's.

"Alan!" sputtered the Shrimp.

"Don't try to talk, Doc," retorted the big man, speaking in staccato, detached clumps of words. "And, whatever you do, don't grab me around the neck—or I'll have to put you out. Lie straight.

Stiff as you can. Hands holding my shoulders. Not too tight. So. Now, keep your head and don't wiggle."

The mighty body started shoreward, with the same long, lazy strokes, the Shrimp bobbing along in tow. The Shrimp obeyed orders, right meekly. He lay stiff and straight along the water, his face stuck upward, turtle fashion; his shaking fingers barely maintaining their grip on the swimmer's shoulders. He felt very sick, very dizzy, very helpless—and, at blurred glimpse of the white clad woman awaiting them on the camp dock, very much ashamed.

And thus rescuer and rescued reached the head of the little pier. The big man raised himself easily over the side of the dock and, stooping, lifted the Shrimp bodily by the scruff of the neck, to the stringpiece.

The Shrimp's knees turned to tallow, as the other placed him none too gently on his feet. He collapsed suddenly to a sitting posture on the boards. There he sat, blinking, gasping, looking up in dazed helplessness at the man and woman above him.

"Alan!" exclaimed the woman again.

And, at something in her tone, the Shrimp's dizzied brain cleared ever so little.

"It's all right, Hera," laughed the big man. "Don't be scared. There wasn't any danger. The boat'll wash in pretty soon. The wind's bringing her along. In ten minutes or so I can wade out and right her."

"But—"

"In the meanwhile," he went on, pointing to the gasping and recumbent Shrimp, "permit me to turn over to you that bright light of the medical profession, your gallant husband. You'll find him rather weather-beaten and a trifle moist in spots. Just at present he's hardly recognizable as the 'Little Giant of Surgery,' as one of the papers, last month, called him. But when you've dried him and ironed him, you'll be amazed to see how nicely he'll freshen up."

The woman looked at the speaker. The morning sun was beating down on his flushed face and drying gold hair; his eyes were blue as a frozen river. The wet silk shirt clung close to his body,

outlining its muscular curves, the great sweep of chest and shoulder. He looked like some re-incarnated Norse sea-king newly arisen from the waves—splendid, gloriously strong, perfect in beauty and in youth.

From him the woman's dark eyes roved to the Shrimp. He sat there, on the dock, flattened out, spineless. From his fast thinning black hair and limply straggling little mustache and carefully trimmed beard the water trickled. The gay outing suit he had worn to-day for the first time was a grotesque wreck. His big head seemed too heavy just now for the puny neck to support; and it slumped ludicrously above the narrow chest and the thin, bony shoulders. The army of patients who were wont to reverence him as Arbiter of Life and Death, and the world-great doctors who hailed him as peer, would have lost a shred of their idol-worship had they seen him just then.

The Shrimp had summoned all his resources to smile up reassuringly at his wife. And in so doing he had caught both looks that flitted over her daintily bronzed face: the expression that had leaped unbidden into her eyes as they had rested on the hero-form at her side, and the slower, less well-masked aspect wherewith she had gazed down on himself. And the Shrimp's hardly-achieved smile was wiped from his face as by a sponge.

Slowly, painfully, he scrambled to his feet, and stood swaying ever so slightly, in the center of a spreading pool of water.

"You'll catch cold," said the woman in sudden maternal solicitude. "Hurry and change your clothes."

It was to Alan she spoke. Yet it was the Shrimp that made quick answer.

"All right," he said, dully. "I will. And—thanks, Alan. I hope I haven't hurt your little yacht."

"It's a cat-boat, Doc," said Alan, carelessly. "Not a yacht. And you haven't done it any harm. Better get a change and a rubdown and a drink, though, or you'll have your rheumatism back with you again."

The Shrimp turned meekly and plodded up the path toward the shack that

stood in the little lake-island's center. His soaked, bedraggled appearance as he toiled up the slope was too much for Alan's risibles. He broke into a big laugh, a laugh in which Hera, after an instant's struggle with compunction, joined.

The duet of laughter beating agonizingly in his ears, the Shrimp pursued his way to the shack, not once looking behind him. The sound of the others' mirth lent speed to his lagging feet, as a flung stone might quicken the pace of a dog that has run away from a beating.

Half an hour later, Hera, coming into the shack to make ready for luncheon, found the Shrimp crouching on a camp-stool, his pose suggesting a caricature of Rodin's "The Thinker." He had not taken off his wet clothes, and the deer-skin rug beneath the camp-stool was soaked.

With a punctilious observance of minor courtesies that of late always vaguely irritated his wife, he got to his feet as she came in. She halted just within the doorway and surveyed him, her dark straight brows drawn together in a wondering disapproval wherein her husband read contempt as well.

"What a mess!" she exclaimed, with a glance at the rug. "And you haven't even changed your things. What in the world have you been doing all this time?"

"Nothing," he answered, as he struggled to get out of his shrinking coat. "Nothing."

For a moment, she did not speak. Then she said with a sort of weary impatience:

"Nothing? That's what you have done most of the time, since we came here. Isn't it?"

"No," he made categorical reply after a brief interval of thought. "I've done a good deal, I think. I've got a burned hand, trying to make fires. I've infected two of my fingers, pulling fishhooks loose from gills. I cut my foot pretty nastily, last time it was my turn to chop firewood. And to-day—just because I thought I remembered, from a boy, how to sail a cat-boat—I nearly drowned. Yes, on the whole, I've done quite a lot of things since you got me to rent this island."

He did not speak with the remotest accent of complaint, but more like a child who recounts, at command, a list of the schoolday's tasks.

"That is true," she agreed lightly. "In fact, if only you *would* do 'nothing' there would be fewer silly accidents and less to worry all of us."

"I'm sorry I worry you, dear," he said, in genuine regret. "I haven't meant to. The whole thing was done to please you: taking the island, spending my vacation camping here, asking Alan along, and—"

"Alan!" she echoed. "I don't know what we'd have done without him. I never realized, back in Philadelphia, what an Admirable Crichton he was. He has been the salvation of the whole affair."

"Yes," assented the Shrimp, "he has. I've noticed it. You're—you're—you like Alan pretty well, don't you, dear?"

She glanced sharply at him. But the Shrimp was busily wringing out his drenched coat and had no eyes for her look of query-challenge.

"Yes," she said at last. "I do. What woman wouldn't?"

"That's right," he assented, with difficulty loosening his stringy tie and limp rag of collar. "What woman wouldn't? He makes a big hit with women. I've heard men talk about it. A big hit. I wonder why."

His remark did not seem to call for an answer, yet Hera accorded one, speaking quickly and on impulse.

"Why?" she repeated. "Why not? Isn't he everything that women, from childhood, look up to as their ideal in a man? He's a giant, he's handsome, he's unbelievably strong. He knows by instinct how to do everything. Apart from his cleverness and apart from the strain of protectiveness and chivalry that women love so, he is—oh, he's a *man*. A *man*."

"I see," said the Shrimp. "I see. A man. That is true. He's a man. By the way," he broke off, with a rueful little smile of self-deprecation, "do you know what he called me once? A 'shrimp.' I heard him. It was at the club, last—"

Hera's irrepressible laugh broke in on his recital.

"A 'shrimp!'" she cried. "Oh, it was rude, I suppose, abominably rude. But—but it—"

"But it fitted," he finished. "I know. We don't pick out our own bodies beforehand. It's no more my fault, I suppose, that I look so insignificant my own wife laughs when she hears me called 'a shrimp,' than it's to Alan's credit that he's built like a Greek statue. Our bodies are wished on us. And all we can do is to make up for their defects, in other ways, if we can. A fellow wrote about me, once, in a Sunday paper, that 'I hadn't enough body to cover my intellect and that my mind is almost indecently exposed.' A body like mine wouldn't turn into an Apollo Belvidere if I trained and took physical culture for a year. And at the end of that time I'd probably be a more muscular shrimp—but still a shrimp. With the mind, it's different."

"No doubt," she said, with a half-stifled yawn. "No doubt the 'mental strength' you're forever talking about would be a very wonderful thing. And no doubt it's a fine thing to be spoken of as one of the deepest thinkers and most brilliant surgeons in America. But,"—with another glance at the collarless, meager little man—"you'll have to forgive poor frivolous women if they are more interested in watching a glorious figure than in watching the workings of a weighty mind such as yours. Sometimes I get almost sick of hearing praises of your intellect, from people to whom physique is nothing. A Canova gladiator may not be as instructive to gaze on as a twelve-volume encyclopedia, but it is more ornamental—and more thrilling. If Alan had lived in the cave-man days—the days of the Survival of the Fittest—the roomiest cave and the loveliest cave-girl would have been his."

"While I'd have roosted in a tree, and gone a long time without a mate?"

"I didn't say so," she murmured politely, a little ashamed of her outbreak.

"You didn't have to," he replied. "Your eyes saved your lips the work. Even if I'd had a mate, in those days, I suppose—I suppose Alan would have had little trouble in winning her away from me?"



"You'll have to forgive poor frivolous women," she said, "if they are more interested in watching a glorious figure than in watching the workings of a weighty mind such as yours. A Canova gladiator may not be as instructive to gaze on as a twelve-volume encyclopedia, but it is more ornamental—and more thrilling. If Alan had lived in the cave-man days, the roomiest cave and the loveliest cave-girl would have been his."

She flushed hotly, opened her lips for a quick speech—whether of denial or rebuke—then closed them again.

"A wilderness camp like this brings people back, more or less, to cave days, doesn't it?" he asked, irrelevantly. "I've thought of it, several times lately. Makes worthless the things we learn in civilization and scrapes off the veneer. If there's a true cave-man under that veneer he comes out strong. But when a physical weakling, a man of cities, is under it, why, such brain-power as he's been able to acquire doesn't count for much. And he's more or less likely to come out—a shrimp. The fact that he has made good in the World of Brains doesn't help him to shine in this forest World of Bodies."

He wandered shufflingly into the adjoining room for dry clothes, the water in his absurdly small shoes "squattering" drearily as he walked.

But at lunch time he seemed quite to have forgotten his pessimistic chat with Hera. He had lost the half-sullen taciturnity that had marked him during the past few days. He was lively, unwontedly talkative—for him—and he roused Homeric laughter on the part of his wife and Alan by his weird efforts to prepare Beauregard eggs in a way he said he had once seen them cooked at a studio meal.

Lunch over, Hera banished both men while she took her daily hammock siesta.

Alan and the Shrimp strolled off, pipe in mouth, toward the shingle below the rocks.

For a time after they threw themselves down on the sun-warmed beach, they smoked idly and in silence, lazily watching the little blue waves flap against the shore stones and then retreat, drawing a rattling line of pebbles along with them.

It was the Shrimp who broke the silence.

"That fellow you were telling us about, at the fire last night," he began. "The Malay who ran *amok* and came for you with a knife, on the beach at Kata-Kati—were you scared?"

"Scared?" repeated Alan, with manifest effort coming out of a reverie as he answered. "Scared? No. Why should I

have been? There wasn't any time. It was touch and go. I had just time enough to duck under his arm, as he lunged for me, and grapple him."

"You broke his back, I think you said?"

"The underhold. Yes. It was a case of me killing him or him killing me."

"You don't believe in showing mercy when it's a life-and-death struggle?"

"Mercy's a fine thing, Doc—in theory. But when it comes to a 'life-and-death,' or any other vital issue, there's only one choice, I should say."

"And you weren't afraid?"

"Of the Malay chap? Not that I noticed."

"No remorse?"

"For killing a rabid beast? Scarcely."

"That's queer," mused the Shrimp. "I'd have lain awake nights brooding over what I'd done. And, as soon as I'd fallen asleep, I'd have waked again with a jump, at the memory of how he had come at me with the knife. Kris, I think you said the name for those Malay knives is, didn't you? Yes, I'd have worn myself to a wreck, between remorse and retrospective scare. I envy you your pluck and your nerve. You've got both. I've seen them tested, often enough. I envy them almost as much as I envy you all that strength of yours and your way of knowing just what to do in a crisis."

"Thanks," replied Alan, somewhat embarrassed by the crass openness of the praise; then shifting the talk from himself, he added in ponderous humor:

"But if remorse for killing one greasy Malay would have kept you awake, I wonder how you ever manage to sleep. You've been a doctor for how long? Fifteen years or so, anyhow. And they say you have performed more operations and more delicate operations than almost any man in America. Your list of slain, by this time, must make *Bluebeard's* collection look like a deserted village."

The Shrimp frowned ever so slightly. The rare deaths among his patients lay ever like millstones about his neck. And whenever his almost matchless skill chanced to be set at naught by Death's wholly matchless power, his grief and shame were poignant.

But his face cleared almost at once.

He even forced to his tired eyes one of the dutiful smiles that Hera had lately begun to find so annoying.

"Perhaps," he said meekly. Then, the smile still twisting his lips, he went on, in the same almost deprecatory voice:

"You're in love with my wife, aren't you, Alan?"

The younger man leaped to his feet and stood glaring down, dumfounded, at the little recumbent doctor. The Shrimp had shifted neither pose nor expression.

"Don't get excited, Alan," he reproved gently. "Sit down and let's talk sanely. There's no need for being rattled. I wonder what it is that always makes even the brawniest, pluckiest man so deadly afraid of—of even a Shrimp, when the Shrimp also chances to be a husband, the husband of the—"

"What in blazes are you talking about?" growled Alan, his face red, his eyes ablaze—adding: "And I am not 'scared,' as you call it. It's only that your insulting fool-question took me by surprise. I—I—"

"Sit down. A chap who has faced death, fearlessly, as you have—a dozen times or more, I suppose—ought to be ready for surprises. And he ought to keep his nerves in better shape. Sit down, wont you? Yes," the Shrimp rambled on, "it's a queer thing, the way the Lover is always in mortal fear of the Husband. It's the Law, I suppose. But it's not well that any man should be so afraid of another. I remember, once, at St. Joe, a patient of mine—a husky ex-pugilist he was—ran ki-yi-ing down the street in blue terror; and after him ambled a little one-armed man, with only half a lung, and carrying no weapon. And—"

"I tell you," snarled Alan, "I'm *not* afraid! Not of you or of any other man. And what right have you to hint that Hera—"

"I always put the 'I'm-not-afraid' liar in the same boat with the 'I'm-an-honest-man' thief," observed the Shrimp. "But of course—"

"I was knocked out for a moment to think you could insult Hera so damnable. That was all. If you were only larger—"

"If I were larger," mildly suggested the Shrimp, "we could have had a spec-

tacular cave-man battle here on the beach. But I'm not. It would hardly afford you even a minute of after-lunch exercise. Now, sit down, and try to get your nerves in hand. I—"

"My nerves?" snorted Alan. "I have no nerves. I—"

"No 'nerve,' perhaps? And after that fight at Kata-Kata, too! Sit down, wont you? Let's talk this thing over, quietly. I'm not going to preach. And I'm not going to remind you that you call yourself my friend, and that perhaps you owe part of your start in life to my help. I just want to talk things over, sanely, with you, as I said. Surely, you owe me that much."

"Sanely? I think you're insane," sputtered Alan. "As for your daring to insult Hera as you have—"

He finished the sentence in a rumble. But he forced himself to sit down—at some slight distance from his host.

"That's better," mildly approved the Shrimp. "Now I'll be as brief as I can. You're in love with Hera. She fancies she's in love with you."

"I—"

"She isn't really. Only, she doesn't know it. What she's in love with is an Ideal—an ideal that's a cross between a primordial anthropoid and a collar advertisement. She thinks it's you. I don't blame her."

"Doctor," put in Alan, getting better grip on his self-control and speaking with a very fair semblance of annoyed superiority, "your ducking this morning must have washed away your brains. You're an old friend. I owe a lot to you. And the Missus has been mighty kind to me, besides. So I overlook what you've said. When the guide comes back from the mainland this evening with the launch, I'll start for Philadelphia. For, of course, after this, I can't—"

"Alan," commented the Shrimp, "I heard you make the same brave sounds, once, at the Union, when you were trying to convince three other poker players that your bob-tailed flush was a royal. Drop it."

"Doctor—"

"Hera and I have been pretty happy, the ten years we've been married. She was content with me, even though she's

of the Juno type, and I'm physically negligible. It's Nature's law of averages that such marriages are generally happy. We doctors understand that. She was proud of me, too—proud of the scraps of fame I was able to glean. Then, three months ago, I brought you to the house. I think it was about three months ago. Or was it four? No matter. —You were all the things I'm not. And, from the start, you and she were attracted to each other. She didn't know it yet. But I did. She liked to look at you, and she liked to hear your yarns of adventure. You got to calling each other by your first names. And—"

"If you objected to that, why—"

"I didn't. Only to what it meant. I've known cases like yours and Hera's that died a natural death when the man and woman were thrown together all day and every day for a long time. When the woman didn't have a chance to fluff her hair, and when her nose got shiny with sunburn; when she had a view of the man before he'd shaved and when his coffee hadn't routed his morning grouch. That's why I rented this island when she wanted me to. And that's why I asked you to camp here with us. It was a sort of operation. But it worked out the other way. One of my failures. It showed you at your best and me at my worst."

"You're talking rot. She—"

"This morning was the climax. I can read her face as easily as I can read print. She knows now—or *thinks* now—that she cares for you. You are her hero. Her cave-man. She looks at me as though I were a monkey with fleas."

He paused, and with petty precision adjusted and relighted the tobacco in his pipe, his sensitive surgeon-fingers working swiftly and with skill. For a time, Alan did not answer. Then, squaring his shoulders, he met the Shrimp's pleasantly inquiring gaze with eyes in which flashed a new-born resolve.

"Well?" queried the Shrimp.

"Well," echoed Alan, "let it go at that. I'm in love with Hera. You say she cares for me. I'd give my life to believe it. What then?"

"Good," approved the Shrimp. "Now that we're dropping bluff and coming down to facts we can get somewhere."

"I love her," said Alan, almost fiercely. "From the beginning I've loved her. It has been torture to keep my mouth shut. I've tried to remember what I owe to you and that you're my friend. Perhaps I might have succeeded, if you hadn't smashed everything by speaking as you've just done. Now it's too late."

"Yes," agreed the Shrimp, "it's too late."

"Back at home," pursued Alan, "you'd probably order me out of your house. And then I'd probably waylay Hera in the street or else telephone her. Out here, there doesn't seem any set rule to go by. If it were a few hundred æons ago, and you and I were better matched, we'd have fought for her. If we were in France or Italy, even now, we'd settle it with pistols, or—"

"But unluckily we aren't there or in the Cave of Ages or in Philadelphia. As for shooting at each other, the only weapon on the island is Hera's cat-rifle. And I'm afraid, even if we took turns, we'd use up all the ammunition before we did much damage."

"How can you joke about it?"

"If I can stand it," said the Shrimp. "can't you? The joke seems to be on me."

"On *you*?" growled Alan, in a flash of rage. "On *you*? No. On *me*. And on every other big and strong man. Once a man's glory was in his strength and size. Strength was the cave-world's aristocracy. But this is the Age of the Little People, the triumph of the mediocre. It began when gunpowder made the cripple's trigger-finger more powerful than all the giant's muscles. And it's been getting worse, every century, since. What's the advantage of size and strength, nowadays?"

"Having neither, I can't say. But—"

"Strength used to rule. Then the Little People conjured up a bugaboo and called it the Law. And it bound Strength, hand and foot. The Law is what's fighting for *you*, to-day, and making me helpless against you. There's no equal ground where we can meet, man to man. I wish to Heaven there were!"

"You are mistaken."

"I am not. There is no—"

"If there were—if there was an 'equal ground' where you could fight me, man to man,—where neither Law nor Strength would be invoked,—would you fight me—for Hera?"

"Would I?" shouted Alan, his eyes aglow with furious eagerness. "*Would I?*"

"That is what I asked you," courteously prompted the Shrimp.

"You know I would. To the death!" cried Alan, unconscious of his own theatrical vehemence.

"I am glad," said the Shrimp, with a smile that now was neither rueful or deprecating.

From his pocket he drew a little oblong, pasteboard box, opened it and produced a flat, folded paper.

"I prepared these before lunch, today," he explained. "They are powders, you see. Quite fresh."

He opened the paper he held, revealing a pinch of powder in its center.

"The idea isn't wholly mine," said the Shrimp, "as perhaps you'll recognize. You remember the famous duel between the two Napoleonic officers? They'd tired of the old sword-and-pistol customs, and they resolved to fight a duel whose originality should make it the talk of France. It did. They got a chemist to mix five big pills, all alike in looks. Four were made of chalk and gluten. The fifth contained enough poison to kill a half-dozen men. The duelists ate pill after pill, in turn, at five minute intervals, till one fell dead. Now this powder is—"

"If you think I'd enter into a bug-house contest of that sort!" cried Alan, getting to his feet.

"Of course you will," corrected the Shrimp, with perfect friendliness. "It's just what you were clamoring for. A man-to-man fight, on perfectly equal ground, where neither Strength nor Law would count."

"The law—"

"The law will know nothing about it. One of us will be dead, within the next three hours—of heart trouble. There will be no inquest. I've provided against that. No inquest, no Scandal."

"You're mad! I—"

"No. For the moment, I'm a 'cave-

man.' Like yourself. We are in the primeval wilderness, battling for the woman we both love. Doesn't that sound natural? Hera hinted to-day that if we were back in the prehistoric ages, you would have the loveliest girl for a wife, and that I'd have to wait long before I found a mate. Well, I shall have to wait three hours—or less. By that time, I shall have won or lost. She will go to the winner. Come, man! Even a gallant soldier of fortune need not turn up his nose at such a deadly duel. It will need almost as much courage as it took to break that Malay's spine when he ran *amok*."

"Do you think I'll do such a suicidal thing?" yelled Alan, eyeing the powder with all a normal strong man's ignorant horror and dread of drugs. "You're a dangerous maniac, Doctor! Throw that stuff away! Throw it away, do you hear? Throw it away, or I'll take it from you."

Alan made a move as though to fulfill his threat. The Shrimp, with a gesture equally quick, lifted the powder to his own lips and gulped it. Alan stared at him in dumb fear.

"I used two powders," remarked the Shrimp, evenly. "One is perfectly harmless. The other is one of the most powerful drugs known. I've taken mine, as you see. Now—"

Alan, with a gasp of stark fright, tore the little pasteboard box from the Shrimp and hurled it into the lake.

"Thanks," said the Shrimp. "I was just going to do that. It was empty. This powder I took was the only one left in it when I brought it out of my pocket."

"The only one left in it? What—"

"Keep cool, friend. Really, you're not at your 'cave-man' best, at this moment. I've taken my powder, and I'm more or less calm about it. Is the hero of the Malay affray going to be less of a man than—a shrimp?"

"What's an antidote for the stuff you've taken? Quick! Tell me!"

"If it's the harmless powder, there's no need for an antidote. If it isn't, there's no antidote for the need. Where are you off to?"

"To call Hera. If—"

"Hold on! You've forgotten about your own powder."

"My own? I told you distinctly I'd have no part in such suicidal craziness!"

"I was afraid you wouldn't," sighed the Shrimp. "I hoped I'd misjudged you. But I was afraid. You're all right when strength can help you. But when it's a matter of true courage—stripped of strength—I had my doubts. So I made certain."

"Made—"

"Made certain. By giving you your powder beforehand."

"It's a lie!" almost screamed Alan. "I haven't taken any medicine in more than a year."

"Oh, yes, you have," smilingly corrected the Shrimp. "So don't call names or get all worked up. You took it. And you didn't like it."

"Didn't like it? Oh, you're mad as a hatter!"

"You *said* you didn't like it. That's all I know about it. You laughed at it, and you said: 'It tastes pretty awful. But I'm hungry enough to eat the shack itself.' So you bolted it."

"H? What?"

"The powder. In the Beauregard eggs. Less than an hour ago. When I fixed the eggs for lunch,—you'll recall, by the way, that I put yours on your plate myself,—well, I—"

Alan seized him by the throat. But the mighty hands were clammy wet; and the fingers, that meant to crush, merely shook.

"You—you vile little murderer!" babbled Alan.

"Was that what the Malay called *you*?" asked the Shrimp, making no effort to defend himself, and speaking with tolerable ease through the panic-weak grasp on his throat. "This is no murder. It's a fair fight. Cave-man against cave-man. The kind you've just 'wished to Heaven' we might have. On equal terms; and on the only equal terms that would involve no scandal. The duel is on. In a very short time it will be settled in one way or another. We are fighting fair. I give you my word of honor that I took an even chance with you on the powders. Hera need never know how one of the two men who loved her died. No one need know. It will all be quite natural. First a clamminess of

the hands, a dryness of the throat, a sense of chill and dizziness, then—"

Alan's sweating hands fell limp to his sides. His lips cracked and his mouth stood open. Of a sudden he turned, with a choked cry, and ran staggeringly up the slope. The Shrimp followed, calling in alarm:

"Surely you aren't going to be cur enough to distress Hera by telling her?"

Alan neither heard nor heeded. Bursting into the clearing beside the shack, where Hera lay reading in her hammock, he panted:

"I'm poisoned! This—this devil has murdered me!"

A single glance at his distorted face and glassy eyes, and Hera was on her feet beside him.

"Alan!" she cried, seizing his arm. "What do you mean?"

He threw off her eager clasp in a rough frenzy.

"Don't stand gaping like a fool!" he cried. "Get his medicine chest. You must know where he keeps it. Get it and find some antidote for—"

"There is no antidote," quietly interposed the Shrimp. "At least, none that I care much about giving."

At the half-hope in the words, Alan wheeled on him:

"For God's sake, Doctor!" he croaked. "For *God's* sake—"

"Alan!" broke in Hera, in stark bewilderment. "What on earth!"

"He's poisoned me!" bellowed Alan. "I can feel the symptoms. All of them. The dry throat, the chilliness—"

"I have not poisoned you," retorted the Shrimp, coldly. "I took an even chance with you. You know that. Man, brace up, can't you, and behave more like a human being and less like a kicked puppy. If it is death, then face it at least as bravely as your Malay—"

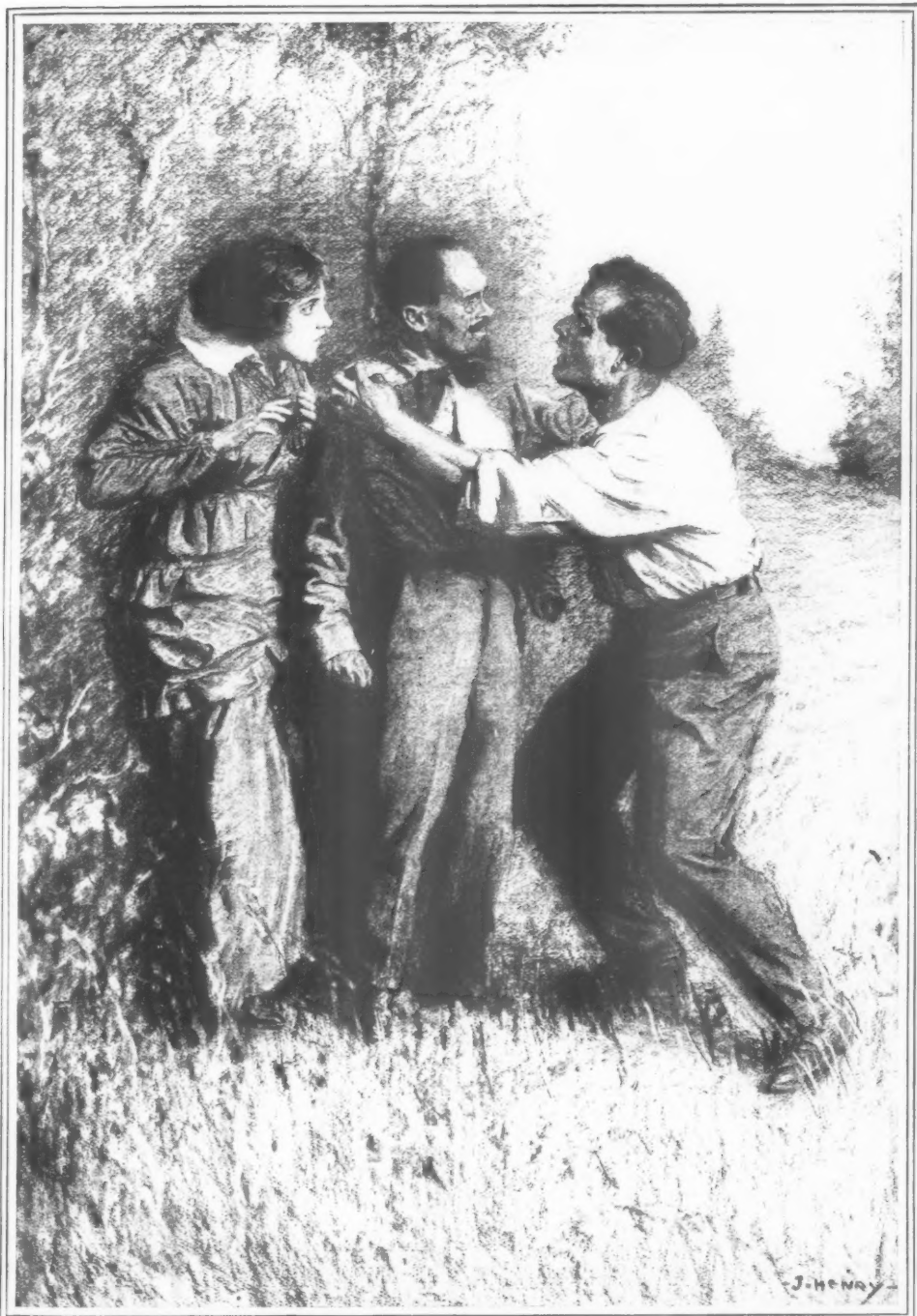
"There *is* an antidote?" wailed Alan. "Get it for me, I'll—"

"You will give her up?"

"Yes, Yes, oh, *anything*! Give—"

"Give up what?" demanded Hera.

"Give *you* up," translated the Shrimp. "Alan's in love with you. Aren't you, Alan? He longed for a chance at cave-man methods, so he could battle on even terms for his mate. So I—"



"For God's sake, Doctor!" he croaked. "For God's sake—" "Alan!" broke in Hera, in stark bewilderment. "What on earth!" "He's poisoned me!" bellowed Alan. "I can feel the symptoms. All of them. The dry throat, the chilliness—"

"It's getting worse!" moaned Alan. "The antidote! I'll do anything—"

"Alan!" demanded Hera, "are you delirious? Tell me what—"

"You see, my dear," went on the Shrimp with the air of a clinic lecturer, "the 'cave-man' you called so glorious and so chivalric, is losing a little of his magnificent poise. But—even in death—he still adores you. He would far, far rather die loving you, than take the antidote and live without you. Eh, Alan?"

"Give it to me!" entreated Alan, unhearing, his faculties dulled to words and looks, alike, sensible only of his peril.

"You'll give up Hera if I do?"

"Yes, Yes, I—"

"You don't love her?" persisted the Shrimp, ignoring Hera's indignant protest.

"The antidote! I'm getting faint! It's working up to my brain."

"Alan!" Again cried Hera, dumfounded. "What—"

"You wouldn't risk death for her?" persisted the Shrimp. "Hera, try to persuade him."

Alan shrank from the wondering woman as if she had struck him. His knees shaking, he stretched out agonized hands of appeal to the Shrimp.

"Say 'I don't love you, Hera,'" dictated the Shrimp. "Say 'I want to live and I don't want you.'"

"I—" croaked Alan, panic-deaf.

"Don't!" begged Hera, wheeling on her husband. "I can't understand this hideous farce. Are you trying to humiliate me? It isn't—isn't like you. It's horrible to see a grown man so abject as he is. I didn't know—I—oh, do what Alan wants you to, whatever it is! And make him stop gibbering so. It's *terrible*! I feel as if I were in a nightmare. Ugh! Take him away, *please*!"

"Just as you wish," said the Shrimp, with a shrug. "But—"

"The antidote!" wailed Alan, drunkenly fixing his faculties on one idea, and deaf and blind to all else. "For God's sake, the antidote!"

"The antidote for what?" asked the Shrimp. "For the powder I put in the Beauregard eggs? It was a subtle and mysterious compound known as 'paprika,' hitherto ignored by science as a mere condiment. I see now, though, that it is a strong cave-man reagent. My own discovery. The only possible antidote I can think of is an allopathic dose of sanity."

Alan, swaying, stared dumbly at him, trying to grasp the meaning of words and tone.

"My own powder," went on the Shrimp, "contained five grains of asperin. I take it for my rheumatism. It was the last powder in the box, but I don't grudge it. A twinge of rheumatism, down there on the rocks, gave me the idea."

"Asperin?" muttered Alan, still dazed. "What's—"

"I told you one of the powders was a deadly drug. Asperin is one of the deadliest on the market—if you take enough of it. Half a pound, or even an ounce. I told you the other powder was harmless. Paprika, until now, was always supposed to be. I told you, too, that we'd fight our duel on grounds where neither Strength nor Law could interfere. You remember that, don't you? Well, we have fought it."

Alan, a gurgle in his throat, vanished into the shack. The Shrimp turned to face Hera. In her face, indignation and bewilderment still battled for mastery. But, looking keenly at her, the Shrimp read more, in the big eyes fixed on his. So it was with a new note in his quiet voice that he asked:

"Should I have had to wait so very long for my mate in the cave-days, Hera? Shall I have to wait *very* long for her—now?"

"Deadlock," by Mr. Terhune, a story of a man and a woman faced with the most difficult decision in life, will be in the October Red Book, on the news-stands September 23rd.

From Kiver To Kiver

By Opie Read

Author of "Old Lim Jucklin," "Crossing the Line," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY A. THIEDE

MR. READ has brought back to us that lovable character, Old Lim Jucklin, and in so doing, produced a story with all the flavor of a perfectly made mint julep.

SINCE I had seen old Lim Jucklin many years had passed. That he was still living on his quaint old farm in North Carolina I knew from an occasional letter from him, usually written with a broad pencil on a bit of paper bag. Once, for Christmas, he had sent me two game cocks, together with these instructions—signed by himself, and, to add strength and importance, by a local justice of the peace:

These here roosters are gamer than Peter was when he drewed his sword and cut off the year of the servant of the high priest. They are brothers and are from as good a family as Joshua himself and are more willin' to fight. They will have to be kept apart, for bein' brothers don't keep them from wantin' to git at each others' wattles, which comes, I reckon, from their long association with the human family.

On holidays and especially on occasions when the women folks are away from home you may take them out to the stable and let them make a few passes at each other, but never let them fight to a finish unless some great trouble has come on you, such as heavy

taxes or dangerous sickness in the family.

A few days later and there came from the old man another letter:

I find that I can't put up with the thought of them roosters bein' away off there so far from home. It keeps me awake at night and my wife has noticed that vidults have lost their holt on me. Thurfore, please send the roosters back to me and I will send you two of the biggest turkey gobblers that ever strutted.

And then one day I met the old man in New Orleans. With his wife, old Aunt Susan, his grandmother Minnie Haws, and the slim young fellow soon to be the girl's husband, the old rooster-lover had gone down to get his first view of the Mississippi River and the old romantic metropolis of the South. I found him and his family quartered in a quaint and quiet little hotel such as it would seem is never found except by pleasurable accident; and even when he had sent to me the



name of the street and the number of the house, I encountered difficulty in finding the place, behind a brick, iron-spiked wall.

How graciously time had dealt with him! No whiteness, no frost; but rugged in iron-gray he gripped me, his eyes aglow with that mischief-light, the rare gift of the gods to the aged.

"How on earth did you ever find this place?" I asked, looking about over the tile-paved court, at a vine-covered pagoda whence I expected to hear issue the voice of cavalier, thundering for drink.

"I'll tell you," Aunt Susan spoke up. "We were ridin' on one of them high-rigged things, not knowin' where we were goin' to put up, when all at once Limuel, he cried out, 'Stop here at this tavern.' He had caught sight of some game chickens in the back yard."

"And I knowed right then it was a civilized place if it *was* French and outlandish," the old fellow declared. "Oh, I tell you it's narrow to believe that all the Lord's folk live in one neighborhood, for the landlord of this place is all right, although it's as much as you can do to understand what he says; and his love for the beautiful and the brave—"

The old woman broke in upon him: "Limuel, game roosters aint everything, I don't care how beautiful they are. The Lord spoke many a word that don't apply to game roosters, but you don't appear to know it."

In his wink the old man included his granddaughter, the slim young fellow and me. "Possibly so, Susan," he admitted. "But I reckon the Lord put into the heart of the rooster a big mission when he crowed Peter's shame."

The old lady was quick. "But no bigger mission than he put into the heart of the dove when she brought to Noah the true sign of dry land."

I THOUGHT she had him there, and Minnie Haws must have thought so too, for with the light of sympathy in her eyes she looked at the old man, distressed with the thought of his entanglement. But uncertainty was to endure only for a moment.

"The dove brought the news that the body was to be saved, material man," said he. "But the rooster was charged with a message to the soul of man throughout all the future, establishin' the mercy of forgiveness after sin; and as the soul is more important than the body, so the mission of the rooster was more important than the mission of the dove."

Now upon this metaphysical turn, threatening to maintain for an hour, the others fled the room, leaving me alone with the old man, and he laughed to see them scurry, looking with tender fondness after Minnie, leading the slim young fellow by the sleeve—a youth still gawking on the uneven ground lying between the departing nondescript and the coming of the individual. Having nothing to say, which was often, he laughed, and as with nearly all hair-triggered mirth, his laughter was frequently at the wrong time.

"Fine young shote," declared old Lim. "Knowed his granddaddy, old Litt Moore; run a ferry-boat and was powerful apt in religious argument. Saw him knock a circuit rider into the river once with his own saddle bags, over a disputed p'int in baptism, provin' that immersion sometimes followed argument even if it wa'n't always essential to salvation. And his grandson Tobe, here, is a fine young feller—haint jes' found himself yet, but his appetite's good and he don't drink no man's lickier."

"He seems to be good-humored," I ventured.

"Oh, yes, but when needs be, he's got temper. Saw him hit a feller named McCracken a mighty healthy jolt—grandson of the McCracken that was sorter accused of bushwhackin' durin' the war and was hung by the Yankees on the public square in Perdy."

"And you think that young Tobe will find himself pretty soon, eh?"

"Bound to, especially as he has been feelin' round for himself a good bit. He wanted to be an architect in Perdy, but I p'inted out the fact that there hadn't been but one house built in the town since the war, and that was a barn. Then he 'lowed he'd be a dentist."

"And is he studying dentistry now?"

"Well, no, I can't say that he is, exactly. You see I p'inted out the fact that old Luke Brizentine pulls folks' teeth and knocks out the teeth of hosses for nothin', which would go to show that a dentist would have a rather hard time makin' a livin' in our community. But I really believe that young Tobe is about to strike his gait. A farm implement house down here is willin' that he should sell their goods up in our country, and he is down here now to complete arrangements. I believe he'll do well, for

tell him that a thousand dollars these times is not to be thought of. Why, if I was to dream about that big a sum it would skeer me awake. We haven't had the best of luck these dozen years. Crops haven't been none too good, and Minnie's father got caught in a land scheme, and I'll tell you when he got out he looked like a jay bird that had met a sparrow hawk. But Minnie says she is goin' to git that money; and her grandmother has told her so often that the Lord will provide, that she believes it."



"Mercy on me, Limuel," she says, "lead me away from this place."

he has almost persuaded me to buy a harrow from him."

"Minnie seems to be devoted to him," I said, in want of something better to say.

"Loves him like a boy loves a stray dog." He laughed at his comparison, a remembered protection of a homeless cur no doubt coming back suddenly to him out of the past. "And she thinks that if she could only raise a thousand dollars for him somehow, all of their difficulties in life would be settled. I

The old lady, the girl and the young fellow came back into the room. Tobe was so pleased to see me again that he laughed immoderately, and I fancied that if he could infuse his new employment with such enthusiasm he would not only sell a harrow to the old man but compel the mayor of his town to buy a threshing machine.

The old lady was speaking: "I told Limuel when we started down here that he could go anywhere in the town, except to one of those fetch-taked opries.

And if he goes to one of 'em I'll pick right up and go home. Oh, I've hearn of how them women of the opery do—come right down off the platform and kiss the men, 'specially the old ones. Old man Price went to one over at Raleigh, and the court in Perdy granted his wife a divorce; and I want to tell you, Limuel, that any woman that would kiss old Price would kiss any skeer-crow that ever flapped a mouldy coat-tail."

Old Lim laughed. "I'm not goin' to any opery, Susan, although I saw in a paper that at one of the operies here there were more than two hundred chickens on the stage."

"That ought to be ag'in' the law," she declared. "Just to think of keepin' them poor things from goin' to roost! I tell you it's cruel and ought to be stopped. Minnie, don't you and Tobey go into such a place. If you do, the Lord will never let you have that thousand dollars."

Minnie stole occasion to say to me that she and Tobe had tickets for the opera. "Haven't we, Tobe?" And Tobe burst out with, "You bet," then laughed with a tremendous roar.

"He's the wittiest thing!" was Minnie's verdict of his remark and his performance. "You just ought to hear him sometimes when he gets started."

It was my aim to lead the old man into one of his characteristic moods, and he favored me. "You ricollect Doc Simmons, don't you? Rode a spavined hoss to church to show humility in the sight of the Lord. Well, t'other day I was sittin' out in front of the house when Doc, he come along with a jug, and he says, says he, 'Lim, let me leave this here jug on your steps till I go over to the blacksmith shop;' and I says, 'Leave her all you want to.' He did, and hadn't been gone more'n fifteen minutes when here come Ab Stokes—you ricollect him; red-headed feller that buttoned up a wasp nest in his Sunday coat and the folks all thought he'd professed religion. Well, he sits down on the steps, he does, and begins to talk about the chills and fever over in his neighborhood, all the time slowly slidin' down closer to the jug, with me lettin' on like I didn't notice him. After a while he begins to

stroke the jug as if it had fur on it; and then when he thought I wa'n't lookin', he pulls out the corn-cob stopper with a *thung!* And then he tilts the jug and takes considerable of a pull. Pretty soon he gits up and says, 'Believe I need a little exercise.'

"Mebbe so," says I.

"Then he goes out in front and begins to gallop up and down the road, a-kickin' up his heels each time he'd pass the gate. I jest sat there and said nothin', givin' him credit for knowin' his own business. After while Doc he come back to get his jug, and secin' Ab a-gallop'ing up and down the road he inquires of me, 'What's the matter with that fool?'

"Don't know that I can say exactly. Doc, but I reckon you're gettin' at his simptoms when you call him a fool. He took a drink out of your jug and then begins to gallop.'

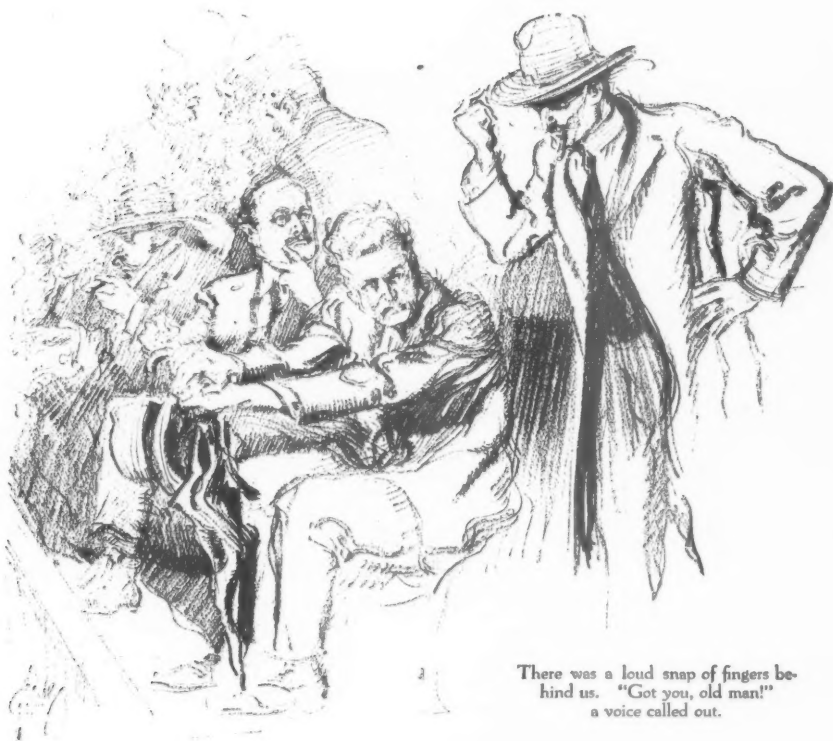
"And no wonder," says Doc. "This here jug is about two thirds full of hoss liniment."

"Now, Limuel," the old woman spoke up, turning from the window, "you know that aint true."

"Well, now, Susan, from the restricted view of a woman's standp'int, mebbe not. But from a man's broader view, yes. The narrow facts of this world have never done the world much good. What makes the world great is imagination instead of statistics. I get my thrill out of the growin' field of corn and not the corn in the barn. Why, hello, here's Buck! Why, bless you, how are you?" And the old fellow seized upon a man who had just appeared at the door, and shook his hand heartily.

CHAPTER II

BUCK ELLIOTT was a sort of respectable rounder. He knew the town as a spider knows the secret pockets of his web, but unlike the spider, Buck set no fatal traps, and unlike the fly, was caught in none. Being town-wise, it did not follow that he was ignorant of the country, for on his excursions out of the city he had sought old Lim, and together they had up-trod many a bass stream to its trickling source among the hills. The old man had told me that



There was a loud snap of fingers behind us. "Got you, old man!" a voice called out.

within Buck there was just enough of the rascal to sweeten him—"like a little alcohol to keep his juices from sourin', you know," he said. "A mighty engagin' companion is the feller that keeps his rascality so well hid that you never can quite get at it, jest as a thing is always puttiest that no words can describe."

I saw at once that the old lady did not like Buck. Early she had asked him if he had been baptized and he had answered: "Well, no ma'am, can't say I have—that is, on purpose." After this her view of him was ever streaked with suspicion; and when in the evening, at the time of his visit at the quaint hotel, Buck suggested that the "men folks take a turn about town," the old lady ill-favored the project.

"Lim," she said, "you jest want to go around to that opery and look at them chickens, and I know it as well as you do. But what can chickens amount to, staggerin' around there blinded by the light?

Why don't you go to the Y. M. C. A. that I've heard so much about?"

"A fine place, ma'am," Buck spoke up. "I have seen some mighty fine amateur wrestling there. We might drop in there. But wherever we go, ma'am, I'll promise you not to take him to the opera. You can safely trust me for that. An opera is about the tameest thing I ever struck."

"But don't the women come down and kiss the men, jest like our preacher said?"

"Well, now, Ma'am, if the women of the majority of the operas I've seen were to pass their kisses around, they'd empty the house in no time. They'd see me scramblin' to get out, I'll tell you that."

Here the old man stole a chance to whisper: "Make it blacker'n that, Bucky."

"These handsome pictures you see of opera women generally aint them at all," Buck went on, catching Lim's suggestion and warming to his work. "No, ma'am.



The old man winked. "Swiftness is seemly when we are gittin' away from a danger, Susan, but it smacks of greediness when we are goin' toward a pleasure."

They are generally the pictures of church choir girls stolen from photographer's frames out on the street."

"That ought to be against the law," Aunt Susan declared.

"It is, ma'am, and we've done everything we can to stop it. I helped to arrest one of the opera managers last week, and the Rev. Mr. Stickney made a powerful speech, but the feller proved an alibi and got off."

"Oh, the pity of it!" she deplored. "But why don't they make them alibis against the law, too, so there couldn't be any chance for 'em to get off?"

"That will be done at the next meeting of the legislature, ma'am. Ready to go, Uncle Lim?"

TOBE made a mild show of wanting to go too, but Minnie hooked him with her eye and held him fast.

Out in the flash of the brilliant lights, the old man as happy as a child, Buck Elliott gave forth a piece of startling information. "Uncle Lim," said he, "one of the most important events in the history of this old town will come off to-night. In the ground room of the ancient St. Louis Hotel, where the slave market was a long time ago, the finest

roosters of Havana and New Orleans will fight to a most thrilling finish."

My hand was on the old man's arm, and I felt an electric tremor shoot through him. "Good Lord, is that true, Buck?" he almost cried, halting somewhat in his pace.

"True as any Gospel ever writ, Uncle Lim."

"And me right here in the town at the time! Buck, I believe it was intended for me to go there."

"From the foundation of the world," Buck agreed.

"Yes, sir, and why should I fight against a thing decreed so long ago? I tell you Buck, it's not right."

"I wouldn't show a heathen spirit by fightin' against it, Uncle Lim. I'd go. It will be something to tell to your great grandchildren."

"That's true. And it's a mighty mean man that would cheat his great grandchildren out of an entertainment like that. I promised not to go to the opory, and a cock-fight is different from an opory, I take it, Buck."

"Yes, and if it wa'n't, I wouldn't give a snap to see the feathers fly. There'll be an immense crowd, but I've got three tickets and—"

"All worked out, all intended," the old man broke in, currying favor with his conscience. "We can't help ourselves, and that's all there is to it."

"You see there were no tickets for sale," said Buck. "not one, when I got to the place, and what should I do in my great disappointment walkin' along the street but pick up an envelope lyin' on the sidewalk and find three tickets in it."

"Bucky!"

"Three, bright as new dollars. I can prove it, Uncle Lim. Here they are;" and the gracious liar exhibited the three tickets.

"That settles it. Buck; and in goin' I don't lose any of my faith in the Book, still believin' in it from kiver to kiver. Lord, but this is a beautiful night."

"Even though it has begun to rain," I ventured.

"So it has, but I want to know what's more beautiful than rain? Yes, sir, a beautiful night and a beautiful world, made so by the Lord in His wisdom. Buck, you don't reckon there's danger of some other fellers gettin' our seats, do you?"

"Not on your life. The law puts up with a great deal but it wouldn't put up with an outrage like that."

NOW the old man's gait was fast, as if in rhythm with a quick measure humming tunelessly in his heart, and his lips were silent for a time, until we came abreast of a great house of trade, and then he said:

"This place in here rather makes me sad. T'other day I was in here with Susan and she saw a long coat that took her fancy mightily, made out of some sort of hide, I could see. I reckoned that it might be worth fifty dollars, and she 'lowed that none but the wicked would ever pay that much for a coat, with so much distress in the world. About this time a clerk came up and asked her if she wouldn't please try it on. Well, he seemed like he would take it as an accommodation if she would, and she did; and I never saw anything that fitted as nice."

"This is plucked beaver," said the clerk as Susan was gettin' side-ways

glances at herself in a big glass.

"Yes," I 'lows jest as natural and unconcerned as if I'd wore plucked beaver hide all my life. 'And what might this particular collection of skins be sellin' for to-day?'

"Then he says, 'The market is away off and at present we are practically givin' these coats away.'

"Delighted to hear it," I says, and Susan took another squint at herself.

"Yes, sir," says the clerk, looking as sad as if his last cent had been taken away to pay for a tombstone, 'and we'll let that coat go to-day for six hundred dollars, marked a thousand as I am willin' to swear.'

"I never saw anybody get out of a thing as quick as Susan got out of that coat. 'Mercy on me, Limuel,' she says, 'lead me away from this place, for I've almost been struck blind.' And I took her away from the only piece of duds that I ever saw her heart particular set on."

CHAPTER III

IT was a mottled crowd we mingled with, entering the portals of the old St. Louis Hotel, and the congregation inside was spotted of the respectable, the passable and the complexion of "perfect gallows." Fate had pointed out to Buck to "find" good seats and he had found them, down well near the pit, with the old man seated just in front of us, a little nearer. The first bout was to be a battle between two "birds" unknown to fame or pit, a dark Red from Havana and a yellowish Gray from a parish up the river from New Orleans. Walking about was a strutting character, a Spaniard, Cajio Diego, Buck told me.

"He either wins or loses hundreds of thousands of dollars a year," said Buck. "He prides himself on his honor and is as game as any cock ever heeled."

Now the heelers were putting the glittering steel gaffs on the cocks, getting ready for the fight; and Old Lim was tense in suppressed excitement. "That Gray's a great cock," he said. "Look at his color, shading into old bone polished, as it lowers down his neck, just like Sam I used to own; and I'd bet five thousand

of newest and brightest dollars he can whip Red."

At this instant there was a loud snap of fingers behind us. "Got you, old man," a voice called out; and there stood Cajio Diego. He gave Lim a sharp look, and then turned about to catch another bet with a snap of his fingers. I felt uneasy, and looking at Buck I saw that his face was white.

"Great heavens, we'll never get out of here alive," he said, his voice shaken.

"Why so?" Lim inquired.

"Because you have bet five thousand dollars with that Spaniard."

"Why, I didn't mean it, of course."

"But that's the way they bet here. They never put up a cent, and always settle after the fight."

"But I'll go and tell him I didn't understand."

"That won't do any good: a bet's a bet; and he'll knife you if you try to get out of it. And if you win and try to get out of it, he'd do the same. There's no way out, Uncle Lim."

"Well then," said the old man, "let it stand as it is. I got into it innocent, but I never squeal; and if I lose, I'll go with him and make my farm over to him. That's the best I can do, and if he's a gentleman he'll accept it, and if he aint, why him and me for it, that's all. It was intended for me to come here to see this great fight and I'm not goin' to worry. If Gray loses, I'm a pauper and that's all there is to it. Look at 'em!"

THE cocks were at it, the feathers flying, yellow and red; and the old man clapped his hands and shouted, "Hike there, Sam—git him down, old boy, git him down."

Now was the fluttery shock, the muffled rebound, and not always graceful, except as there is grace in desperation, when hate and determination to kill catches sight of its own reflected image in the vitreous eye of death. Now they stood, half asquat, roughened necks outstretched, sighting, Gray with one eye gone, steady of bleeding head, blood on the steel of his right gaff.

"Steady, Sam! git him down!"

Together they struck high in the air. Gray fell back, staggered; and hot into

my ear came Buck Elliott's words: "His other eye's gone and he's as blind as a bat."

Gray was wavering, going to fall, I thought, but with a great effort he fluttered high, just at the instant when exultant Red made at him. Down came Gray on Red's back, and down to the sockets he sank his steel. A death squawk, and Gray fluttering free of his dead enemy, steadied himself for a moment, eyeless head high; and while in wild enthusiasm a mob was shouting his victory, he raised his wings, crew his defiance and fell over, dead.

Now all was commotion, but Old Lim stood quietly looking on, a smile lighting his countenance.

"Here comes the Spaniard," said Buck. "He's got the money for you in his hand."

"Well, inasmuch as at one time I thought my old farm was gone, I think we can fix that part of it without much trouble," was his answer. Cajio Diego stood facing him.

"Old man, you are game," said the Spaniard, his eyes aglow with admiration.

"Well, mebbe not as game as you think."

"Yes; and if you'll go along with me I will insure your fortune," urged the Spaniard.

"No, much obleeged to you. I don't like the strange water a feller has to drink in travelin' around."

"Here is your money,"—and he began to count out five-hundred- and one-hundred-dollar notes. "I would have given you odds, and you could have won ten as well as five thousand."

"No, I bet all I was worth. Much obleeged to you, sir. If you ever come up into the North Carolina hills, drap out my way, ten miles from Perdy on the Gum Springs meetin'-house road, and I'll go down to the rock spring house and fetch you out as fine a cup of butter-milk as you ever smacked your mouth over. Well, good-by."

"This thing has just begun," said Buck, "but I think we'd better be getting out."

"Yes," the old man agreed, "I think I've got enough for one night."

CHAPTER IV

OUT again in the flash of the electrified night, the old man was profoundly thoughtful. "Gentlemen," he said, "it would grieve Susan to the soul to know that I had gambled."

"Well," Elliott drawled, "the fact that you have won will soften it a trifle." (Buck was a married man.)

"Yes, but even then it wont do. She shall reap the benefit without havin' to put up with the humiliation. As for me, I can stand a good deal of that sort of humiliation. Havin' gambled, it is now necessary for me to lie; and thus it

follows that one vice leads to another."

"Intended that way from the foundation," said Buck.

"Well, yes, pretty much. Hello, this place is still open, and if I don't step in and buy Susan that beaver coat, the Lord never made crab apples."

We went in, glad to go with him on such a mission, and proudly he bought the coat, had it put neatly into a showy paper box, red preferred and acquired; and now it was with more than pride that he walked toward the hotel; it was the march of a conqueror. I offered to carry the box, and Buck insisted on relieving him of his burden.

"No, gentlemen; no, I thank you. It was intended for me to tote it. And now let me see: I wont present it to her to-night; it would rob her of her sleep, and besides, I haven't got my virtuous lie spread out clear in my mind. I need to wallow with it for a few hours. So to-morrow about eight o'clock the ceremony will take place, and you gentlemen are cordially invited."

Buck had an engagement, he said, but I promised to be present, anticipating a keen pleasure,

Just before coming within sight of the old man's quaint hostelry,

Buck halted and said: "Well, Uncle Lim, I must leave you here. It has been a great evening, and I know we'll never forget it. But just before I go I want to clear my conscience a bit. I didn't find those tickets, Uncle Lim: I bought 'em."

I knew that on Buck's part this was a play of mischief rather than an adjustment of conscience, and into my mind there flashed a specula-



"Good Lord, Minnie, not a word."

tion as to how the old fellow would meet it. Ah, but how accommodating was his creed!

"That's all right, Buck. It was a part of the plan that you should lie about it. Good-night, and may the Lord discover that it was intended He should bless you."

ANTICIPATED pleasure so close-trimmed the time that I forestalled the strike of eight by full five minutes on the following morning, and was talking with Aunt Susan, the girl and Tobe, ever upon the burst of uproarious laughter, when the old man came in with a large red box under his arm.

"Now, Limuel, what on earth have you got there? A contrivance for carryin' a chicken in, I'll be bound."

"No, Susan," said the old man, sitting down with the box on his knees, "nothing of that sort, though come to strict confession, the contents of this here box is somewhat flavored with chicken. Susan, and the rest of you, mortal man reaches a stage or an opportunity in life when he finds it almost impossible not to speculate a little. The feller that buried the talent and didn't speculate with it displeased the Master."

"Limuel, will you please tell us what you are tryin' to git at?"

The old man winked at me. "Swiftness is seemly when we are gittin' away from a danger, Susan, but it smacks of greediness when we are goin' toward a pleasure. But to the p'int: a man reaches a place on the road when his mind must speculate or turn stale. I didn't want to be stale in—I might say in the sight of the Lord, so I speculated. There fell to me by accident a chance to buy what they call futures, and I bought 'em, on chickens, usin' the judgment that the Master endowed me with. The—I might say the market—went my way, and at the close there I stood, with more money in my hand than I ever saw before—mine, five thousand dollars; and if you'll take the trouble to open this here box,

you'll find that beaver coat in—"

"Oh, Limuel!"

"Don't take on more'n you naturally have to. Minnie, help her put it on, please."

"Oh, Grandfather," the girl cried, "was there ever anything so beautiful!" And Tobe roared.

With Minnie's help the old lady got the coat on, and she stood in trembling ecstasy. Then came reaction. "Limuel, I don't think I can afford to wear it; I really don't think so."

"Well, you can always afford to wear anything that's paid for, Susan."

"Yes, but think of the thousands of poor women that can't have one."

"I reckon. And think of the thousands of rich women that can. And I bet you not many of 'em lost sleep because you went so many years without one."

"Grandmother, go into the other room where you can get a good view of yourself in the glass," said Minnie, and when the old lady with youth in her feet had acted on this suggestion, the girl turned toward Lim: "Grandfather, I saw in the paper just now that an old man who shouted 'Hike there, Sam!' won five thousand dollars from—"

"Good Lord, Minnie, not a word. That dear old soul mustn't know. You know it was intended that—"

"Yes, Grandfather, and intended that you should lend Tobe a thousand dollars."

"Y-y-yes, I think it was, Minnie. Tobe, you shall have the money." And with a roar Tobe shook the chandelier.

The old lady came back, smiling in happy resignation, and Minnie said to her: "Grandfather is going to lend Tobe a thousand dollars."

"Yes, because your grandfather is the best man in the world. And Limuel, oughtn't we to feel thankful? Haven't I always told you that the Lord will provide?"

"That's right, Susan; and let it be understood as we go along that I still believe in the Book from kiver to kiver."

"The Horned Owl," the next of Opie Read's finely flavored stories of the South, will be in the October Red Book, on the news-stands September 23rd.



Crooked to the End

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

Author of "The Island of Regeneration," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK B. HOFFMAN

A story of two men and a woman in the torture of the desert, told with the vividness only a master writer can command.

THE outward and visible aspect of the Terror of the Southwest did not correspond with his inward and spiritual deficiencies. Like the famous lass of the song, he had a "delicate air." His hands were white and slender, his fingers long, and, like those of the equally famous heathen Chinese, taper. His voice was low and gentle, his manner languid, almost caressing, his bearing graceful. His other outward seeming in face and figure cor-

responded with these details. The whole effect was distinctly good, not to say beautiful. But those blue eyes could flash; that soft voice could ring; those slender hands could not only manipulate a card but hold a steady gun. That languid form could suddenly grow as tense as a tiger about to spring, and the heart that beat within that breast was as ruthless and as cold as any that ever pumped hot blood.

The man was a devil who looked like

an angel. You smile? Seems this the wildest of melodramatic romancing to you? Ah, some of us have met the devil, and he generally looks that way. His greatest asset is the power of disguise—dissimulation. So he was in this, his chief representative in the Southwest. Many a man had trusted to that smile; many a woman succumbed to that soft voice, to the ruin of the one and the dishonor of the other.

Amid the rougher, coarser, ruder personalities of the border, this very difference between him and them had given him a supremacy unquestioned. It is a mistake to fancy that only truth inspires love, honor wins devotion, virtue commands obedience. Like is pleased with like, and over the black hearts of the frontier this man exercised exceptional sway. At his word, guns leaped from their holsters, horses were ridden to death. For him men would die, and women, too. It was not theory, this statement; it had been proved again and again.

Sometimes the children of light are wiser than the children of this world. Sometimes they awake to a sense of their power and they use it. After long forbearance—endurance, rather—it had been decided that the Terror of the Southwest should be eliminated. The decision had been deliberately taken; it had been carefully and thoroughly carried out. A sheriff had been elected by the most long suffering county for the express purpose of putting through the designs of the reputable.

The election had been by ballot, and for once intimidation and threat had failed. The God-fearing—by contrast with the other section the term may be considered appropriate—had won. That a man had been found to take the office was indicative of two things: his own hardihood and the high opinion in which he was held by his primitive fellow citizens.

The Terror had mocked at the efforts of his enemies. Although defeated at the polls, he had laughed the result to scorn. The Sheriff suffered by any casual comparison with the Terror. His best friend could not call him handsome. On the other hand, his worst enemy could not

fancy him dishonest. His acceptance of the office proved his courage. The result of his efforts demonstrated his wit and wisdom. There had been no campaign. The border had not rung with the tramp of horses; sunlight had not glinted from the barrels of rifles. There had been no shooting. How the Sheriff alone, single handed, had penetrated into the Terror's lair and made him prisoner—that was another story.

But such things were done with more or less frequency in the early days of the Southwest. Further illustration of the Sheriff's daring and ability are in no way vital to this account. The Sheriff himself did not consider them of enough moment to dwell upon. Results told. That was all anybody needed to know.

Therefore, behold the Sheriff and the Terror entering the pages of the chronicle on the edge of the desert. To a casual inspection the two were riding side by side as fellow travelers or friends. A closer observation would have noted several essential differences. The Terror's holster was glaringly empty. A man's gun was a sheet anchor—sometimes his God—in those days in the Southwest. The Terror was adrift. The Sheriff was provided with his usual supply of artillery.

Again, next to the gun, man's dependence was upon his horse. To steal a horse was to commit a capital crime. The Sheriff had stolen the Terror's horse. That is, he had requisitioned it for the benefit of the State. The Sheriff had been provided with a horse of his own, but he had magnanimously turned it over to the Terror, because the rights of the State were paramount and the Terror owned the better horse. Besides, the Sheriff was a much bigger man physically and he had need of the bigger mount.

There was no possibility that the Terror would make a sudden dash for freedom. Indeed, there was nowhere to dash in that ghastly desert. There was no sudden cover to be gained by any burst of speed. Monotony, yellow monotony, drifting sand and stunted sage-brush were the prospect. Furthermore, the Terror's freedom of motion was grievously impaired by the fact that his dainty

wrists were gripped by handcuffs of steel and his feet were tied beneath the belly of the horse.

The Sheriff was in no way afraid of the Terror. He had matched himself against him and so far had come off first best. But he had a vein of prudence in his character, and he was taking no risks. He had a duty to perform, and he was neglecting no chance to perform it successfully.

He could have shot the Terror out of hand, when he got the drop on him in that lonely shack to which he had come as to a lover's rendezvous. And everybody would have approved of his action and would have been thankful that the Terror had been eliminated without necessity for a trial. But the Sheriff did not want to deal personally with the Terror, even in his position as an officer of the peace. He was for the law. The Terror must be tried for his high crimes and misdemeanors by the rude courts of the frontier and punished as he deserved when he was found guilty.

There was going to be no dying-with-the-boots-on, gun-in-hand business with the Terror if the Sheriff could prevent it. Alas! Man proposes and God— But I anticipate.

WELL, to get on, which was what the two were doing; behold the Sheriff armed, mounted on the better horse, the Terror unarmed, riding the worse, fettered and bound, nevertheless continually under the watchful gaze of his captor. The desert apparently sprang from one horizon and led to the other; from nowhere to nothing, or with the expansive view of the Southwest, from everywhere to everywhere. Two dots on the expanse, these travelers made. Away from civilization, away from the lack of it, away from men, yes, and from women, there was nothing that particularly differentiated them from any other two men that might be chosen at random and thrown together, "except," as the Terror had said—like Satan he could quote Scripture for a purpose—"these bonds!"

How they came to be attempting the perilous passage of the desert was not difficult to explain. The capture of the

Terror had been effected secretly and in the night, but it had become known. The Sheriff knew that the forces of evil would instantly rally for his prisoner's rescue, and if those forces banded together, as the forces for good rarely did, they would overwhelm him and take his prisoner from him unless he got him away. There had been a hard gallop through the night over rough roads and rougher trails, a long, tiresome wading through river and brook to throw pursuers off the scent, a sudden diversion from the town, the proper destination of the pair, into the desert. Beyond the daylight's purple rim lay another, larger community with a better organization, a braver spirit, more numerous exponents and a safer jail.

It is not infrequent that law, order, religion—and a better jail—lie over the hills and far away, and men must cross deserts to reach them. It was not an easy thing, the crossing of this desert. Life depends upon water. There were water holes known to the Sheriff. If they were not dry the difficulties of the passage would be overcome. If they were—well, they might never get through, and in that event the Sheriff out of duty to humanity would make sure of his prisoner before he died.

Both men were thoroughly familiar with the Southwest. Each could divine the other's thought. The Terror knew why this plain of death had been attempted; he knew to what water hole they were headed; he knew what would happen if they did get water, and what would happen if they did not. If his heart could have sunk under the stress and strain of terrible danger, it would have sunk when they splashed out of the river with full canteens and well-watered horses, and struck the trail that led to the land of nowhere. Hope of rescue disappeared with the dawn. Only by good fortune could they be apprehended now by any rescuing party. The Providence of God might—but it was useless to pursue that line of thought. It occurred to the Sheriff, but the Terror believed in no God and had no capacity to fathom his companion's thoughts in that direction.

The Terror had not only been a stu-



There was no water there; but there was something else—a woman. Her hat gone, her face bleeding, her wind-whipped hair in ragged disarray, her dress covered with dust and sand, she lay prostrate, her hand grasping the strap of a water-bottle—from its position empty. A horse in a state of great exhaustion stood near.

dent of men, and also of women, but of books. He could talk well; he was not averse to conversation; and the Sheriff, striving to disguise an animosity which was personal as well as official,—there, it might as well be admitted,—strove to meet him on common ground, for he too was a man of education. The two travelers beguiled the tedium of the journey by pleasant talk, therefore, and man-like, they carefully refrained from subjects that would naturally have been uppermost.

As I said, neither needed enlightenment as to the immediate plans of the other. They also had one common topic of conversation which both avoided, and that topic was a woman. It had come into the Terror's mind to exasperate the Sheriff, but the man may have had some lingering decency of thought. The mere fact that he had been trapped and taken had inspired a little respect for the Sheriff in the Terror's mind; the further fact that the Sheriff had treated him, aside from this inevitable bondage, with decency, like a gentleman—the Sheriff, not the Terror, being the proper bearer of the term—had inspired in the Terror a little reluctance to resort to his usual practice. So the Terror made no allusion to the woman. It was a great piece of self restraint, because he could have touched the Sheriff on the raw and he could have done it with impunity. The Sheriff was not the man to torture a helpless prisoner. It was not fear of consequences to himself, however, that kept the Terror silent, but some lingering remains of a better nature.

Oh, no, this is not a story of the reformation of the Terror. Crooked he was, and crooked he remained to the end. Still, facts are facts, and with the author's power, he so reads the Terror's mind.

THIS woman was the recently arrived sister of a frontiersman, hunter, miner, man of affairs, and successful in all, who lived on the edge of the desert. On one side of him was heat, drought, emptiness, level sand, monotony, death. On the other side, water, pastures green, hills with verdure clad, cattle, game. He liked to stand between the two eternities,

as it were: between life and its absence. His sister liked it too. She knew the Terror, but not as the Terror; and he knew her, but not as prey.

Love, to how many passions do you lend your name? Did the Terror love the woman? At least he meant her no harm. Could any more be said of what he thought of her than that? The Terror gloried in his evil reputation toward women, boasted of it, lost no opportunities. No whisper of it had reached this girl as yet, and the Terror had been strangely glad because of that.

He had learned that the Sheriff, who was much more than a mere border ranger, had met and was in love with this woman—with what success he knew not.

But we must get on. Back of these two, the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, which is the beginning size of such things from Ahab's day and God only knows for how many æons before, was rising above the horizon. Clouds in the Southwest grow like scandals in society and develop with the rapidity of rumors in the town.

In minutes as few almost as the words I use, the heavens were covered. The storm burst upon them—not a rain-storm; the rain would not fall from those clouds until they struck the cooler air of the high hills, dim and faint beyond the horizon to the westward—but the dust, the sand, the wind, the withering, blasting hot wind. Before it broke over them, the Sheriff edged closer to the Terror and fastened his rope to the Terror's horse. They were not going to be parted in the driving cloud of sand as fine as ocean spray, as cutting as small needles and hurled upon them almost with the velocity of rifle shots. They might die in the sand-storm but at least they were going to die together. The Terror saw the motion, and smiled. For himself, he rather rejoiced in the thought of companionship.

Their present salvation depended on their keeping together, anyway. The Terror shackled and bound on the poorer horse would have had no chance alone. Besides, there was nowhere to go except toward the water hole. "Short notice, soon past," the sailors say, but this was

the desert, not the sea. Neither of the men who had braved it on occasion before had ever seen anything like this. Mouths, eyes, ears and nostrils and clothing were filled with the gritty, choking sand. Blood streamed from their faces. They lost sense of direction instantly. They could only drive like ships at sea, before the storm. Sense of time, sense of distance, were blotted out. The horses were only kept up to their work by a certain indomitable purpose conveyed to them by their riders. And the Terror as indomitable as the Sheriff. Life was as sweet to him as to the other. For while there was life there was always a chance.

LATE in the afternoon, the expected happened. The Terror's exhausted horse stumbled and fell. The Terror, helpless, fell with him. When the Sheriff got him free and took stock of the situation the horse was dead, the Terror with a leg so sprained and bruised that he could scarcely bear his weight upon it and could not walk. The storm was beginning to blow itself out. The two could see, now. All the Sheriff had to do was to ride away and leave the Terror unarmed and bound and alone, and the vultures would be picking his bones before another sunset. Whether his motives were those of humanity or not, the Sheriff mounted the Terror, tied and fettered as before, on his own horse. He took the bridle in his hand and walked ahead, leading; thus they plodded on.

Toward evening they came upon the water hole. The desert here was less level. The sand had piled in dunes which the next contrary wind would blow down. Behind one of these dunes lay what? Salvation or— There was but one canteen of water left. The Sheriff had expended the other in a vain effort to revive the Terror's horse and he had given the balance to the Terror, not on any complaint but because in spite of an iron control, he had seen the anguish the other suffered. He had husbanded the remaining canteen with care. There might be no water in that hole. They went around the little elevation, peered down into it and found the possibility had become a certainty. The place was

dry. There was no water there; but there was something else—a woman. Her hat gone, her face bleeding, her wind-whipped hair in ragged disarray, her dress covered with dust and sand, she lay prostrate, her eyes closed, her hand grasping the strap of a water bottle,—from its position, empty. A horse in a state of great exhaustion stood at a little distance from her.

A common enough frontier tragedy, easy to account for. A ride out into the desert, on a good horse, in the pleasantness of the early morning, a sudden storm, a mad gallop toward safety, a lost way. Ah, but this was she—the woman.

The two stared, words being unequal to describe their exhaustion, for now the sun beat down upon them with a terrific intensity that dried the blood in the veins. The Terror spoke. He used the common phrase of the frontier, meaningless as oaths usually are, and yet in this instance perhaps with some unconscious purport.

"My God, it's —"

The Sheriff nodded. He stood weakly at gaze. The girl was not dead. He was sure he had seen her breathe, or sigh.

"That's the one woman in the world that don't know who I am, or what," said the Terror. The words seemed to be wrung from him. "It's the one woman I've ever seen that I've really cared for in a decent way," he went on. "I wouldn't like her to see me this way. You understand?"

"I understand," said the Sheriff, "because that is the woman I am intending to marry if she will take me."

"Well, it's going to be touch and go with any of us to get out of this mess," went on the Terror. "And I don't care much for appearances usually, but if you'd—"

The Sheriff shook his head.

"Look here," said the Terror, "I am unarmed and more or less helpless. I can scarcely move that leg. And I'll give you my word that I won't take advantage of it if you'll just take off these handcuffs and untie this rope."

"Your word?" said the Sheriff reflectively. "Is it worth anything? Have you ever kept it? Why should I trust you?"

"Because you love this woman," said the Terror, "and you can understand."

The Sheriff stared at him.

"You've got to decide quickly," said the Terror. "We've got to do something for the girl. I won't break it this time, so help me——" He stopped. "I haven't anything to offer you, but I say I won't break it."

The Sheriff looked him squarely in the eye and the Terror sustained the glance. Slowly the Sheriff drew a key from his pocket. The handcuffs clicked and opened; and a moment later the rope was unbound.

"You'll have to help——" began the Terror, but he changed his mind and swung his unhurt leg over the saddle and fell rather than slid to the ground.

No man could simulate the expression of anguish that swept over his face. The Sheriff reached for the canteen. The man shook his head.

"The woman," he said laconically.

LEAVING him where he lay, the Sheriff stumbled over the sand to the edge of the water hole. It was as dry as a burned-out fire. He turned the woman over; he forced water down her lips; he tore the handkerchief from his neck, dropped a little of the precious fluid upon it and dabbed her bruised cheeks, and with the half bloody mixture bathed her head. And presently she opened her eyes and to her startled vision, the Sheriff's face bending over her was as that of an angel.

"Thank God!" she said, "you have come. I got lost—the storm—there was no water here."

"I understand," said the Sheriff, assisting her to a sitting position.

Her first movement, purely feminine, was to throw her hand back to her head and brush away her hair. A shadow fell athwart them. Standing erect and towering over them, although no one could tell what the effort cost him, was the Terror. He stood there as if nothing was the matter. The woman recognized him immediately.

"You too," she said, smiling faintly. "With two such true men I am safe—safe—I had given up hope."

She buried her face in her hands and

burst into tears, tears of joy, for all the bitterness with which they ran down her lacerated cheeks.

"Here," said the Sheriff, thrusting the canteen into her hands, "drink this. We've got plenty," he lied. "And we'll leave you a minute to get yourself to rights and——"

The two turned and walked away. The Sheriff might have given the Terror his arm, and surely the Terror needed it, but he would rather have died than ask for such assistance. The Sheriff's jealousy of the Terror had flamed into new life at the sight of him beside the woman. True men, forsooth! And he to be coupled with this crook, this black-guard!

Around a hillock and out of sight and earshot they paused.

"Well?" said the Sheriff.

"There isn't much to be said," answered the Terror.

The Sheriff nodded.

"It's twenty miles to the nearest water. We've got two horses. Mine—I mean the one you rode—is good for the journey. The woman's can make half or three-quarters of it before he gives out. I judge. The rest of the journey she can make on my horse, the man afoot. That's the way I size it up."

"You size it up right," said the Sheriff.

"Only one man and the woman can get away."

The Sheriff nodded again.

"I'm your prisoner; the decision is up to you."

"I swore I'd take you to the town and put you in the jail."

"You can do it," said the Terror laconically, "but you'll have to leave the woman."

The Sheriff nodded again. He had seen that from the first, of course.

"Well," continued the Terror, "of course, there's only one conclusion. The man that's left here dies. You've treated me white. Good-by."

He hesitated a moment and then thrust out his hand. The Sheriff stared hard at him. He moistened his dryer lips with his dry tongue.

"Hold on," he said. "You love this woman?"

"Yes," answered the other simply, for this was not a time for reserve or hesitation.

"Does she love you?"

"I don't know. She might have if I'd been what she thinks I am. You love her, too?"

"Yes."

"And she?"

"I don't know. She may if I have a chance to——"

"Take your chance."

"By the Gods, no," said the Sheriff.

"We are here, two men in the desert, alone with the woman we love. She might make a man out of you,"—and the Terror winced at that blunt statement and its implication. "I could shoot you on the spot. If it were a case of you and me only, I wouldn't hesitate, but—but——" He did hesitate then! "I can't decide," he said at last. "We'll toss up for it."

"Don't be a fool," said the Terror calmly.

"I am; and as I am in command, what I say goes."

The Terror looked at him a moment, almost calmly, a curious expression in his eyes.

"That's white," he said. "You're a man. Here,"—he reached down into his pocket, drew forth a coin. "Heads," he cried, "you go; tails, the chance is mine."

The Sheriff nodded.

"No—" he began, and then he stopped.

"You were going to say, 'No tricks,'" said the Terror. "I'm glad you stopped. Watch. Heads you go, tails I."

He flipped the silver coin in the air; it glistened a moment in the sunshine and fell flat on the sand between the two. Both men bent over it.

"Heads!" cried the Sheriff.

"You win," answered the Terror.

He stooped down, picked up the coin and threw it across the hill and over the water hole far into the desert.

"Damn the luck," he added. "Well, go ahead."

"You don't want to see her again?" asked the Sheriff.

The Terror shook his head.

"What would be the use? It would only make it harder. Good-by. You

wouldn't care—" He thrust out his hand.

It required no *Lady Macbeth's* midnight vision to see the blood-spots on that hand, but the Sheriff took it. The two men alone in the primitive, with all the primitive passions in them, but with something higher, some touch of the divine spirit in them too, stood a-clasp a moment. Then the Sheriff turned away. The matter was settled. Moments were precious. They meant life.

"Oh, Sheriff," said the Terror after the other had taken two steps.

"What is it?" said the Sheriff, turning on his heel.

"Are you minded to do me a last favor?"

"What favor?"

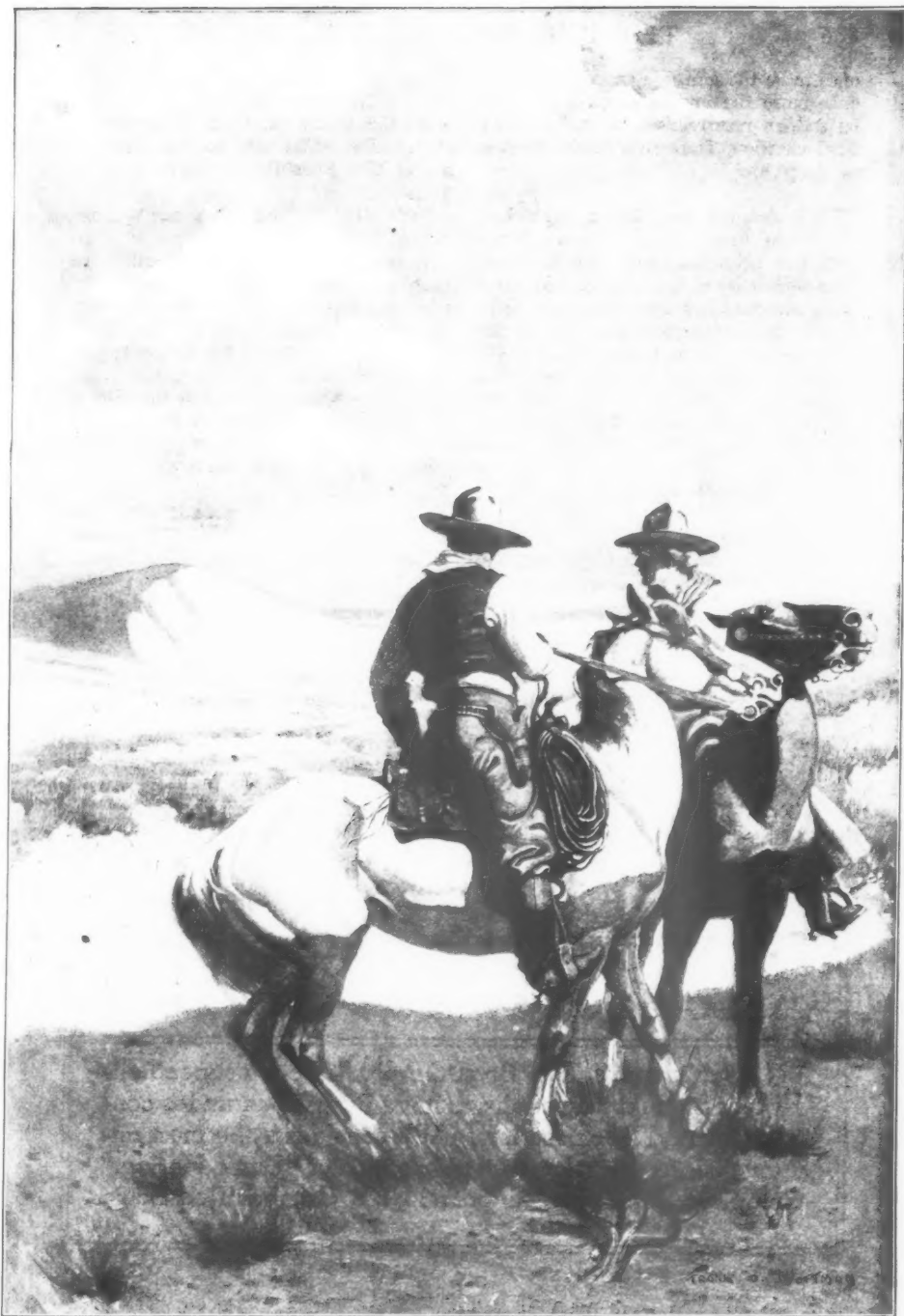
"Leave your gun with me."

Into the minds of both men at the same instant flashed the same thought. The gun was the trump card. Giving it up, the Sheriff threw away his advantage. There was nothing whatever in the reputation of the Terror that would warrant any suspicions of decency or honor. The Sheriff stopped and looked at him a long time and the Terror returned the gaze. What did the Terror want with the gun? Well—slowly the Sheriff stepped back; slowly he drew the gun from the holster, reversed it and tendered the butt to the Terror. The Terror took it and into his eyes leaped flame. Here in his hand was life, safety, freedom, the woman. To offset this, about him, within him, was only the intangible force we call a sense of honor. If he had ever possessed this sense, he had thrown it into discard long since.

With the rapidity of lightning, he realized the possibility of his power. He laughed slightly and raised the weapon. The Sheriff never changed a muscle. Not an eyelid quivered. Neither the hand that held the gun nor the man at whom it was pointed trembled. Life at that instant depended upon the flicker of an eyelid.

"Go, for God's sake, go," said the Terror, lowering the weapon, "while there is time."

The Sheriff nodded. He understood. He turned and walked coolly away. His broad back made an easy target, and



Slowly the two began the journey. They had gone but a few paces when the sound of a shot came to them. The woman instinctively reined in her horse. "What's that?" she whispered. "A signal of—farewell, maybe," said the Sheriff.

once more the gun was trained upon it; once more the unseen force, mighty in its sudden resurrection, powerful in its final exertion, forced down the muzzle of the pistol.

THE woman was better. She had arisen to her feet. The water the men had given her had refreshed her. The horses stood by. The Sheriff carefully mounted her upon her own steed. Slowly he clambered to the back of the Terror's horse. After a moment's thought he wet his hand and let each horse have a breath of freshness. The woman was still bewildered. She suffered his assistance and obeyed his injunctions without comment, but as they started off for the long journey that meant life if they won, she said:

"Where is —"

"He chose to go another way," answered the Sheriff. "And he left to me the task of taking you."

"His horse —"

"It's back yonder."

Slowly the two began the journey. They had gone but a few paces when the sound of a shot came to them. The woman instinctively reined in her horse.

"What's that?" she whispered.

"A signal of—farewell, maybe," said the Sheriff. "Wait," he added, "I'll go back and see. I'll not be a moment."

The Sheriff was not gone very long.

When he came back he carried in his hand a revolver—his own. It was hot from the discharge. One chamber was empty. Its bullet was in the Terror's heart. The Sheriff's face was set and grim.

"It's all right," he said to the woman. "Comé."

A few paces further, the Sheriff's eye caught sight of something white in the sand. He bent to look at it more closely. It was a coin half buried and so placed that under the rays of the declining sun it glittered like a star. Time was precious and strength was ebbing, but the Sheriff could not pass that coin. It was the one which had been tossed up to decide which of two should go and which should stay behind.

He swung himself heavily from the saddle, bent over and picked it up. As it lay in his palm, the handsome head of the Goddess of Freedom was plainly visible to him. The Terror had called the toss. "Heads," it had fallen, and the Sheriff had won.

"Luck or God?" he said to himself, the woman having drawn a little ahead of him.

Then he turned the coin over—and still there gleamed before him, a head! Both sides the same!

"Crooked to the end," muttered the Sheriff, shaking his head and riding after the woman.

Another Pace-Setter!

IN next month's Red Book there will be announced another big feature which we have just placed under contract for Red Book readers. We consider it the most unusual fiction event since the publication of "David Harum." Complete details will appear in the October Red Book.

Out of the Frying Pan—

By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Discards," "Old Enough to be Her Father," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

IDA M. EVANS is at her best in this sparkling story of that apparently eternal feminine instinct to "save" some man from himself.

MARYLENA was the kind of girl who, seeing a cerise hat in a window and liking it, would buy it. Then, having spent good money for it, she would feel obliged to wear it—though her complexion sallowly shouted disapproval—till age or weather rendered that hat unwearable.

"And that takes a strength of mind I'm glad I haven't got," disparagingly commented Estelle, whose plump left elbow rubbed Marylena's at the crowded trimming table of the La Mode Wholesale Millinery House. At the time of the disparagement, Marylena was away from the table and in the general office, answering a 'phone call from Wilbur Hoxon, youngest and—it was hinted—least indispensable of the La Mode's city salesmen.

Saidie Andrisky, at Estelle's elbow, gurgled agreement—through a mouth filled with pins, needle and scissors handle—that in these days, when purple wigs and Poiré's dietary question the war scares' right to the front page, such self-discipline was in bad taste. She added, lifting from her lap a pseudo gravy-bowl, which shaded from a fever flush to *chili* red, with generous sunset splashes between, "Some lid—huh? I'm just crazy over these new melty reds—in a window,"—significantly. "But I've enough sense to know that I'd look like a blighted parsnip if I set 'em next

to my palish skin. So,"—firmly—"I stick to old reliable *ciel*, though I'm so tired of it that a rainy day, when you can't see the sky, rests my eyes."

"Me too,"—decidedly. "And if I happen to lose my head once in a while—like last season, when I wasted a whole week's pay on a reseda tricorné that turned my short nose into a mustard ladle—why, I'm particular to forget my umbrella on a particularly cloudy morning, and then I have a perfectly good reason for buying a new hat. And,"—meaningly, "the same with other things."

Saidie nodded. "Sure. 'Member that Danish bookkeeper I couldn't lose, and I hated to hurt his feelings? One night I pretended I didn't know he had come, and I let him hear how temperish I can talk to my brother. He faded away and never asked for his presents back. And Marylena is too nice a girl to—"

"Sure. Because she likes him—you can't help liking Wilbur—and because he likes her—"

"She wont consider how yellow he'll tinge her whole existence."

"I've tried to tell her, but,"—Estelle's plump shoulders shrugged havoc in the restricted space; a chili-colored heap popped to the floor—"would she listen? Not to a word! Saidie, maybe you could tell her."

Saidie's interruption was vehement. "Oh yes,"—sarcastically. "Oh my, yes!

Any time—"A sniff testified to absolute renunciation of the task. "My dear,"—informingly, "you might persuade pigs that pearls are carrots, or coax a man to trade a touring car for a mule, or cozen a woman into believing a last year's job lot is an advance showing of next season's imported models, or make a slit tube skirt over into a mandarin coat—but no one was ever genius enough to unload advice on a woman in love. And I, for one, don't intend to try it."

"Other ways, Marylena is sensible," Estelle persisted.

"That makes it worse,"—gloomily. "The more sensible a woman is, the higher she kicks her heels at advice—and the more she needs to be forcibly fed with it. Nothing will help Marylena but prayer."

"Prayer is mighty slimsy buckram when Wilbur Hoxon is concerned," snapped Estelle. "Poor Marylena!"

Which was the unanimous opinion of the La Mode trimming room, and other places. Everyone liked Marylena. She had the mild, sensible, pleasant brown eyes that insure a girl being liked by other girls. She had a sensible forehead, too; of that well-roundedness which implies that its owner is more interested in eugenics than in the maxixe. But people who were surprised and perturbed by Marylena's unsensible predilection for Wilbur Hoxon, neglected to notice her soft, perky little nose and a chin that could have been several degrees larger and firmer. However, Marylena habitually carried that chin well up—as though she liked to look at the stars—and there is no question that such carriage does make a chin seem bigger.

In addition, Marylena had a waist so slim that it instantly suggested pale pink silk girdles to you. And her wrists were dimpled. So no one wondered at Wilbur's predilection.

But Marylena's sister Dell, a stenographer at the La Mode house, did not exclaim "Poor Marylena!" She said tartly that Marylena was a fool. Dell herself was engaged to a respectable young German mechanic who each week dutifully passed the major part of his salary over to his fiancée in preparatory nest-egging. Marylena's mother said



When Tom Whately strolled by and grinned chummily at the crowd, Marylena's chin tilted so high that her vision included nothing but the zenith of the Milky Way. Mr. Whately resentfully lifted his own chin. But the two young ladies in his company giggled.

mournfully that she was glad she needn't worry over Dell, at any rate.

Wilbur's mother, a large lady of worried mien, painted the situation in few but colorful words: "I'm terribly glad the boy got a girl like Marylena. I do hope,"—feelingly, "she doesn't throw him over."

Not that anyone disliked Wilbur. Far from it. Dell liked him. So did all the girls of the trimming room, the salesgirls downstairs, the salesmen, the errand boys, old bald President Hackley—and a large crowd of bartenders, chauffeurs, manicurists, café managers and waiters. And since Wilbur, for selling feathers and flowers for the La Mode, received—he didn't always earn it—only around twelve hundred dollars a year, which is not a very big pebble to splash into Chicago's wide financial stream, it speaks well for his charm that he won affection from this variegated crowd, part of which was not wholly unmercenary, to phrase it kindly.

He was a slim, good-looking youth, with gentle, courteous voice, gentle blue eyes, and that gentle, short upper lip, half-childish, half-manly, that every actual or potential mother of a son cannot help being tenderly inclined to.

But that appealing upper lip was wet, not once in a while, but often. And not with ginger ale. Wilbur was only twenty-four, but he had traveled alcoholically so far that he frequently required absinthe to steady his turkey-trotting nervous system.

And the blue gentleness of his eyes could glaze into the shiny gray that green baize tables are used to staring up at. Wilbur didn't hanker for casino, either. He put one hundred dollars, whenever he had it (which was about every third month, the two intervening checks being usually swallowed whole by debts that had long crouched for them), upon a neat felt oblong in South Clark Street—which policemen walked

past every day and never saw except



when some one "higher up" moaned over the 'phone: "Guess you gotta close her up for a few days, boys, till this darned reform wave blows over."

In spite of the half-childish upper lip, Wilbur was no whimperer. When the hundred had been dropped and could no more be rescued from that green table than a La Vallière dropped from an Atlantic liner could be picked up from the ocean's bed, Wilbur would stroll out, accompanied by his friend Thomas Whately, and whistle "You'll Do The Same Thing Over Again" as benevolently as though the money had gone into a gray charmeuse gown for his mother's birthday.

Now Marylena never discussed Wilbur, though in the two years since she had met him her sensible brown eyes had acquired a pensiveness of under-shadowiness that some girls had to use a black pencil to exhibit. Marylena was the kind who warps love affairs and religion in the thick tarpaulin of a reserve that no pin of curiosity or sympathy can penetrate. But she spoke freely, upon any occasion, her real opinion of Tom Whately.

"I despise him! I think he is a steerer for a gambling place. He has a bad influence on Wil—upon young men."

Tom retaliated, after he heard this several times, by not liking Marylena and saying so. He said that she was too good looking to be a missionary's helpmeet. Even a glaring cerise hat couldn't wholly ruin her delicate, high-tilted chin. But she was also too blamed buttinski to be a mere man's wife, and she'd better depart for Kamchatka or Trafalgar Square, where there was need of her disposition, and leave Wilbur in peace.

Mr. Whately was an uncivil, muscular young man, with a rude laugh, a bold black eye, and a lean upper lip that was no more gentle than a scaly beetle's back is downy. He, too, was a city salesman; and sold cigars—which is not a "line" that any initiated mother would wish on a son whom she desired to develop into a king of finance, cigar salesmen in Chicago being thicker than pine cones in Michigan woods. But Tom, in spite

of competition, managed to sell enough stogies to share Wilbur's taxi hire.

It was the unanimous opinion of the La Mode trimming room, and other people in a position to know, that Tom Whately was no more responsible for Wilbur Hoxon's habits than one herring is to blame for another herring's fins.

But, as Estelle mourned, you couldn't tell Marylena so, any more than you could tell her that her last hat, an unlovely thing the shape and hue of an elephant's ear fringed with purple grass, turned her pleasant, sensible face into a depressingly prim visage. You could only say "Sure, the hat's swell." And you could only pretend uncomfortably that you didn't notice her pink-rimmed eyes or droopy mouth.

During the two years since Wilbur Hoxon came to the La Mode house and met Marylena, scarcely a week had passed without her eyes being pink-rimmed once or more, or her well-rounded forehead puckered. And so, when she returned from the general office, and, picking up a pseudo gravy-bowl of peacock maline, absently donated to it some taupe chickweed destined for a reseda soup tureen, Estelle and Saidie directed each other, with knowing side glance, to observe Marylena's compressed lips.

And when presently those compressed lips opened to say casually that Marylena wouldn't meet the crowd at the park concert that evening as planned, because Wilbur would be engaged with a customer, Estelle and Saidie exchanged glances wherein scepticism met scepticism.

"Come, anyway," urged Estelle. "Fred and I will see you home."

"Oh no," said Marylena. "I—I really wished to stay home this evening. I've—some sewing to do."

AND the next morning the scepticism of Marylena's friends was justified. For that night was selected by the Citizens' Reform Club to do work that the police didn't. And in the morning's papers, among those prominently mentioned as found present in the South Clark Street sanctum of chance, were

Wilbur Hoxon and Thomas Whately.

However, after ten sober, pink-eyed days, Marylena forgave him. "Although I wouldn't blame you for never speaking to me again," mourned Wilbur. "But you see, after I got through with the customer, Tom happened along, and so—"

At the next park concert, when Tom Whately strolled by and grinned chummily at the crowd, Marylena's chin tilted so high that her vision included nothing but the zenith of the Milky Way.

Mr. Whately resentfully lifted his own chin. But the two young ladies in his company giggled. One was a plump blonde whom the trimming room did not know. But the other, a slim, red-lipped little salesgirl from the "misses' section," was known throughout the La Mode house for the amount of Majeska's lily and rose that she could put on one small face and the diaphanousness of the silk hose that she bought. She was the kind that Estelle and Marylena, meeting in the elevator, looked at coldly, saying to each other, "Isn't it terrible the way some girls dress?"

Perhaps Clarrie Gilver had heard them. She now said to Tom,—and Clarrie's shrill young voice rang down the soft tum-tum of the band,— "Do you s'pose that gray and purple lid is last year's style or next?"

Marylena pretended that she didn't hear. But her face was pink.

Two weeks later, Saidie was shocked into assuming a task that she had absolutely renounced. She swung into a side corridor as Marylena was lending Wilbur twenty dollars.

"You are easy!" (Wilbur had gone on.)

"It was my own money!" Marylena's cheeks and chin and sensible forehead were scarlet. "And you needn't go around telling folks that he borrowed it! He didn't. I forced it on him, after I wormed out that he is in debt to Tom Whately—for money he spent taking me to theatres. I won't have him in debt to him. I despise him."

Wrath robbed Saidie of discretion. "Piffle! I guess it was about as hard as forcing a caramel into a baby's mouth!"

Marylena,—pleadingly,— "don't waste your life on him. A man who'd borrow money a girl has worked for! And I heard something you ought to know. That Clarrie—"

"If you should spread around that I lent it," interrupted Marylena, "I'd tell about the time you flirted with a perfectly strange man on State Street—oh yes, you did, Saidie! You didn't see me, but I was walking right behind you—"

"I have not the slightest intention of spreading it!" flared Saidie. "I'm sure I have more important things to talk about!"

But in confidence, Saidie told Estelle that Marylena was hopeless.

"Sure," assented Estelle. "Yesterday I hinted—just hinted!—that if that gray and purple hat was mine, I'd lose it! And she snapped: 'I read a magazine article the other day about the extrav-



While of course one umbrella is not excessively outspreading, still, Tom might have held it a trifle to the other side.

agance of working girls being a reproach to America?" Sometimes I don't like Marylena!"

BUT both Estelle and Saidie forgot their common spleen a week later. Marylena came to work, white-faced, and no tilt to her white chin. At the previous midnight, a taxicab had gone *ker-smash* against an iron pole in a violent effort to avoid going into the vacancy caused by the Rush Street bridge swinging out to let a boat pass.

Tom Whately was in it. He suffered only a bruised shoulder. The plump blond, name unknown, was in it. She proved to be a manicurist. Her right wrist was broken. Clarrie Gilver was in it, and her small, impudent face was ripped from crayoned eyebrow to red-painted lips. Three stitches were needed across her cheek. Wilbur Hoxon was in it, and his share was four broken ribs and a fractured collar-bone.

Of the many varieties of humiliation-whipped anger, that flagged by red is least dangerous. Marylena wore a grayish pallor to work for many days, and her lips were tight-drawn. She had been at home sewing, the night of the accident,—and likewise for the several evenings previous,—while Wilbur ostensibly coddled a cold at his own home and retired early!

He sent word that he did not expect her to forgive him. Tom Whately gave the message to Estelle, who passed it on to Marylena—who listened to it and said nothing at all.

Then his mother delivered it. Mrs. Hoxon talked gulpily. She added that Wilbur suffered considerably. When the jagged ends of a rib grate against each other—

"Ugh!" shivered Marylena, who never wore aigrets because of the cruelty involved in procuring them.

And though it was lonesome for him to lie there day after day, his mother sighed that he didn't complain. He realized that he deserved it. Only—this rather tartly—it didn't seem exactly just that Tom Whately should escape with that slight bruise.

"It isn't fair at all!" said Marylena.

Mrs. Hoxon also added that whenever

Wilbur woke, he wistfully wanted to know if the telephone had rung.

So the next evening Marylena went to see him. Estelle went along. Marylena asked her.

Wilbur, his face white against the white pillow, greeted them with the depression of deep melancholy. "I'm no good," he said.

"Nonsense," said Estelle. But she said it half-heartedly.

"I'm not," he persisted. "And it's better Marylena and I should break off. Better for her, and better for—"

Just then Tom Whately breezed in. Estelle told Sadie that she was glad. It was gloomy work listening to Wilbur, and trying not to listen to Marylena's tense breathing.

Tom talked as unabashedly as though all present liked him. "Say, Will, that chauffeur sent word that next time he'll steer us against something softer, like a banana stand. Heard from Clarrie?"

Even Estelle, who didn't dislike Tom at all, admitted that this was simply insolent. Right in front of Marylena!

"No," said Wilbur shortly.

"I guess not!" snapped Wilbur's mother.

Marylena's chin tilted, and very soon Marylena rose to go. Whatever qualities Tom Whately lacked, assurance was not one of them. He took upon himself the courtesy of seeing the girls home. Marylena objected coldly. Estelle didn't. She had no reason to dislike him.

"And I was good and glad he was along," she told Saidie. "All the stars were out when we left home, and two minutes after we left Wilbur, all the rain in the heavens came out. Tom had foresight enough to bring an umbrella. We didn't. And me wearing my new Neapolitan—" And then Estelle hastily changed the subject. For Marylena had approached the table, and while Mr. Whately's umbrella had been tipped to keep Estelle's pink-wreathed black Neapolitan quite dry, Marylena's taupe and purple hair-braid had been drenched. They discovered the soused ruin when they got into the street-car. Little purple rivulets were running down Marylena's cheek. And while of course one umbrella is not excessively outspreading, still,



They discovered the soused ruin of the hat when they got into the street car. "I never liked that hat on you, anyway,"
Tom put in.

Tom might have held it a trifle to the other side. And there was a queer, unsurprised expression on his face when Estelle exclaimed, "Oh, Marylena, your hat is spoiled!"

"Why, so it is," he had said calmly. "Dear me!"

"I guess it is," said Marylena coldly.

"Oh well," Estelle had consoled, "you can buy another."

"I suppose I'll have to—now," said Marylena. And she said it queerly.

"I never liked that hat, anyway—on you," had put in Tom, whose assurance, it seemed, was unlimited.

"Indeed," said Marylena icily. And she put the wet hat back on her head.

"Sure,"—calmly. "I've thought lots of times that if it got spoiled, maybe you'd be glad of the excuse to buy another."

As Estelle told Saidie afterward, if cheek were the only requisite for salesmanship, Tom Whately would be lending Rockefeller a railway pass.

"I'm not," Marylena had snapped. And then she had haughtily paid her own fare. Over the wet hat, Tom grinned at Estelle as he put one nickel back in his pocket.

WILBUR'S bones knit slowly. Marylena looked older—even though she took Estelle's advice when buying a new hat and got a pale blue brim that hid her forehead and added to the tilt of her chin.

Clarrie came back to work. She was thinner, and the rouge on one cheek didn't hide a long white furrow. Meeting Marylena and Estelle in the elevator one day, she flounced an impudent shoulder at them, and said to the elevator boy: "Sure, that was some joy ride. Scared? Not a bit. I'll go again any time I'm asked. Maybe,"—she paused deliberately, and half-turned toward Marylena—"I'm going to-night. Say, don't be all day going down. I got to call up a friend of mine—that's not feeling well. Believe me, four broken ribs are not a joke—"

Marylena and Estelle walked out in silence.

Clarrie's shrill little giggle followed them. "Tom Whately introduced her to Wilbur," Marylena finally remarked

coldly. "I think I shall appeal to his sense of honor and ask him to leave Wilbur alone."

"Oh, I don't know," Estelle unwisely objected. "I heard that Wilbur did the introducing. And there's something I've wanted to tell you for a long time. Tom Whately says—"

"Do you mind if I run on ahead?" Marylena asked sweetly. "I've a lot of shopping to do this noon, and I can go faster alone."

"Oh, certainly!" And afterward Estelle offendedly declared to Saidie, "*Now*, I sha'n't tell her."

Wilbur was in bed some time. The doctor said that drink-soaked bones were not articles that he enjoyed mending. And he added grimly that D. T. backwards stands for Terrible Death. "It's next on the program," he warned Wilbur in the presence of Mrs. Hoxon and Tom Whately.

"So I've tried to tell him," said Tom.

As Mrs. Hoxon afterward reported to Marylena: "Would you believe that he would be so cheeky? When it is all his fault!"

Together they were indignant.

"Yes, I believe it," snapped Marylena. "Didn't he spoil a perfectly good hat of mine?"

"Oh well," said Mrs. Hoxon consolingly, "I wouldn't fret over that hat. Wilbur said several times that it didn't suit your profile."

"Did he?" snapped Marylena.

FINALLY Wilbur came back to work.

He looked older, and chastened. He said openly that he didn't ask Marylena to forgive him, and didn't expect her to forgive him. So she forgave him fully.

Wilbur seemed to appreciate her forgiveness. He was chastenedly grateful. Three evenings a week he spent dutifully at home with his mother. The other four he and Marylena went to moving-picture shows. He was not yet financially able to go any place else.

But Marylena saw to it that they viewed no enticing pictures of gay life, no bad young gamblers or safe robbers. She picked the nights and the theatres wherein Pathé's Weekly or "Spartacus" had the reel innings.

Marylana told Estelle that he had promised to drop Tom. Dell scornfully told Estelle that Marylena got the promise as hardly as a sound molar leaves a jaw.

Tom sent word to Marylena that he would be very glad to drop Wilbur.

And then one noon, as Marylena and Estelle passed the door of the general office, on their way to lunch, Wilbur could be heard distinctly saying into the telephone, "Now, Tom, be a good sport and see me through. I'm doing it on your own advice. The other day, you remember. All right, old fellow. Meet us—"

Marylana had half-paused, as though she wanted to hear more. Then she walked on very fast, and, as Estelle said afterward to Saidie, "No matter how far you had seen Marylena's chin go up, you were always surprised to see how much farther it could go the next time!"

And that same noon, not three minutes later, it went higher. For Clarrie, accompanied by a congenial acquaintance of similar complexion and diaphanousness of hose and blouse, had brushed by them, in the usual noon crush at the front doors. And Clarrie's shrill voice was saying distinctly: "Believe me, there'll be some joy ride for me to-night! Risky? I'll take the risk! What if I don't come back?"

"Oh well," commented Saidie later, "such insolence serves Marylena right. She won't take any advice. I don't care what happens to her."—exasperatedly. "I'm tired being kept uncomfortable by her motherly look."

"Marylena's motherly look?"

"Yes. That combination of hope, patience, fret and Oh-Lord-what-will-happen-next! that is a mother's trademark."

"It gets on my nerves too." Estelle laid a long, disgusted sigh on the altar of friendship.

And then she said determinedly: "Well, if no one else will do it, I will. To-morrow I'm coming straight out and ask her what kind of a home and children and hats she'll have if she marries Wilbur Hoxon!"

"Oh—you don't dare," said Saidie. And she grinned I-told-you-so when Estelle let the morning pass. But Estelle whispered, when Saidie had repeatedly nudged her, that afternoon would be a better time. If Marylena felt offended, there would be less of the day left to



"Sure, that was some joy ride."

endure her displeasure. And by morning she would have had time for reflection.

IN the afternoon—

Clarrie telephoned to a salesgirl chum in the misses' salesroom. The news hurtled up the intervening floors and down corridor and aisle faster than a hailstone can drop out of the sky. The evening before, Wilbur Hoxon had married Clarrie Gilver!

A tremor ran around the La Mode trimming room. Poor Marylena!

Ignorant of the storm of pity and sympathy that was blowing about her, Marylena sewed as placidly as she usually sewed on the day after Wilbur had explained regretfully that an engagement with a customer necessitated his breaking an engagement with her.

Marylena's mouth was compressed. It usually was. Her eyes were shadowed and thoughtful—as usual. Her chin drooped—which wasn't usual. But she neatly frilled a heap of mauve tulle and did not observe that all needles except her own wobbled while their wielders mournfully watched her.

The trimming room surreptitiously sent down word to Dell, who sent back word that some one should tell Marylena. The room retorted that such a task belonged to Marylena's sister. Dell frightenedly refused.

So finally they drew lots. The lot fell to Estelle; and she began to weep, laying her head on Marylena's shoulder.

"Good gracious!" cried Marylena. "Are you sick, Estelle?"

"Marylena," sobbed Estelle, "last night, Clarrie Gilver and Wilbur went out—"

"For a joy ride," said Marylena coldly. "You don't need much guessing power for that. If Tom Whately wants to waste his money—"

"For a lifelong joy ride," sobbed Estelle. "And I hope they have a smash-up."

"You mean—"

"They're married. By a justice of the peace at Crown Point, Indiana. And Wilbur's mother has taken them in. 'Cause, she says, after all, Clarrie is Wilbur's wife."

Into Marylena's thoughtful eyes came

a queer expression that was evanescently familiar to Estelle. When had she seen it in Marylena's eyes before?

"Anyway," she ventured tenderly, "he can't spoil your life now."

"No," agreed Marylena, "he can't—now." She said it queerly.

"And, Marylena, I'm sorry for anything I ever said in favor of Tom Whately."

"Why?" composedly asked Marylena.

"Because,"—indignantly,—"he loaned Wilbur the money to pay for the license, and he gave 'em the wedding ring as a present. And he paid for the taxi—and he advised Wilbur to—to marry her."

"Oh,"—queerly,—"he did!" And then Marylena critically smoothed the tulle that Estelle had crumpled.

THE next morning, Estelle and Saidie journeyed down to the office where Dell typed to inquire whether she thought Marylena would ever get over the shock.

Dell's nose—which had something of the soft perkiness of Marylena's—turned up unkindly. "I think so," she snapped.

"Did she give way after she got home?" they asked sorrowfully.

"Not so you could notice it," said Dell scornfully. "Tom Whately called—to explain his part in the affair, he said. He was still explaining when I went to bed at eleven-thirty. And this morning, when I asked Marylena if she intended to jump from the frying pan into the fire, she said she was perfectly competent to manage her own jumps."

"She never did!" came in incredulous concert.

"And when I asked her,"—more indignantly—"what sort of home and children and hats she would have if she married Tom Whately, she said that he had assured her the home would be a crackerjack if he had to blackmail the W. C. T. U. into smoking his cigars. And she said he was just the sort of man to manage children, 'cause he knew all the pitfalls they might meet. And she said that he'd already proved that she needn't worry about wearing unbecoming hats. I believe that she is glad Wilbur gave her an excuse for not marrying him!"



The Woman He Wanted to Forget

By John Fleming Wilson

Author of "Junk," "Simple Honors," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

A DRAMA of the wide Pacific—vivid, deeply moving, intensely conceived: it shows clearly why its author is regarded as one of the most brilliant of present-day writers.

I NEVER was so surprised in my life," Captain Maibon told me. "Odd that you should ask for him. Hum! Did you know his wife?"

"I had the honor," was my response. "A beautiful and gracious woman. Quite a society person, too, I believe. She is married again."

"Yes," the Captain remarked, peering into his coffee mug.

"But Angell himself? What do you suppose ever became of him? And why did he disappear? He had a good business—and Mrs. Angell certainly held up her end."

Maibon rapped on the table for the pantry boy and ordered more coffee. He seemed peevish. "This schooner is ill loaded," he snapped.

"We're making good time," I protested.

He relapsed into calmness. "Sure we are. I was thinking of Angell. Too bad. Of course, his wife kept up her end, as you put it. The trouble was, he couldn't hold up his."

"But he left her with plenty of money," I insisted.

"Money?" he repeated vaguely. "Money? Oh, yes, of course. There was money enough."

"Ah! you knew him well?" I suggested.

"Certainly," he returned testily. "Wasn't it with him that I did all my trading for six years?"

"Then you know—"

"Everything," he broke out.

"I have always been very curious about the affair," I answered mildly. "Is it a secret?"

"No—not since she is married. I'll tell you about it. Understand, I make

no reflections on the lady—none at all. Facts only."

YOU remember when Norma Roberts and Lemuel Angell were married. San Francisco said it was an ideal match, she with her fine face and splendid figure and wit and social instinct, he with the old and honorable business his father had left him, together with a good constitution and no bad habits. And they were happy, I guess, till Lemuel got into that row with old Jackson. You know Jackson, rich as the inside of the mint, crooked as a dog's hind leg. Lemuel claimed Jackson defrauded him in a deal, and started to get even. But Jackson was a big man, and his wife was Society. Naturally, Mrs. Angell thought it her duty to interfere. She wasn't going to be thrust out of the inner circle simply because her husband thought the old man had cheated. She told Lemuel as much.

I was just in from Tahiti—in the old *Tropic Bird*—and when we had settled up our accounts he asked me to luncheon with him at Jules'. It was a regular thing, that invitation.

Over our coffee he told me what Jackson had done. You remember how Angell looked—always neat and clean and rather restrained? Maybe I'd better say "tamed," in view of what I know. But that day he was tremendously excited.

"And I have to keep my mouth shut about the whole business!" he stormed.

"You've got him cold on ice," I said in amazement.

Angell paused and collected himself. "Well, yes," he said, grudgingly. "But there are so many—there's so much to be considered, Captain."

"What?" I demanded. "He put through a crooked deal and you can go after him. It's a simple business honesty."

"Honesty," he repeated slowly, fixing his eyes on me. "Yes, that's what I told my wife. . . . Women have different notions. . . . Mrs. Angell thinks it's better—" The man choked over his cheese. "She thinks it better to drop the matter."

He was silent and then burst out: "She insists that I go no further with it. In fact—well, she and Mrs. Jackson are friends."

The thing was out, right across that littered table. I could see the fellow was prodigiously worked up. It wasn't so much that he had been cheated, but that his wife had been disloyal, as he thought.

"If I yield this time," he groaned. "I am in Jackson's power. My business honor—" He flung up his hands, as much as to say, "All is gone."

I tried to soothe him. He consented to be calm. "After all," he remarked, as we rose from the table, "I don't suppose it really matters."

BUT it did matter. Day by day he grew morose, testy, with occasional fits of forced joviality. He didn't seem much interested in his business.

One night he appeared on the *Tropic Bird* in evening dress.

"I've come down to have a bite with you," he told me feverishly.

"And in evening dress!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, well! we were going to dine with the Jacksons this time, Captain," he said slowly. "Edith has gone. To tell the truth, I couldn't bring myself to sit at the same table with the old thief. Fancy having to smile into the eyes of a man who has you in his power."

He didn't say much more. We ate our supper and had a toddy later, and he left quite cheerfully.

"You sail day after to-morrow?" he called back from the pier head.

"Sure, sir," I returned, "if you have everything ready for me."

The next morning I found him hard at work in his office. He greeted me curtly and asked me to see to the manifests and papers. His stenographer was waiting, pencil in the air, for him to continue his dictation. I left about my business.

You know when he disappeared, it was found that he had sold his business and deposited a hundred thousand to his wife's credit in Jackson's bank—simply quit. He wasn't heard of again. I fancy the papers were full of it. I didn't see them, for I was running the *Tropic Bird* down into the Trades with Lemuel Angell sitting in the cabin reading a dime novel, "The Liberty Boys' Swoop, or, Scattering the Redcoats Like Chaff."

"I never had a chance to read this kind

of stuff," he told me. "Father forbade it. And of course when I left school and went into the business it wouldn't have done. No, it wouldn't have done at all. But—just listen a moment, Captain."

He picked up the book and read me a bit. Great stuff, too. That novel was about the only thing we had on the ship and I can still remember it:

At this instant there was a terrible crash, and a jar which shook the cabin. The door flew off its hinges and fell to the floor. At the same instant Dick and Sherlock began firing their pistols. It took only about two seconds for them to fire the four shots which they had between them, and then they dropped the pistols and seized their guns. These they fired off and then, clubbing them, began striking at the redecoats who were attempting to rush the cabin.

"Now, there's real action for you," Angell said to me.

As a matter of fact, I never did agree that the story wasn't a bit exaggerated; but that book certainly stirred Angell up. You wouldn't have known him. Within a week he was learning to handle the spanker sheet, and before we raised Tahiti he was a fair sailor. He never spoke of Mrs. Angell.

Once, in Papeete, I suggested to him that he might do some profitable trading.

"I have exactly five thousand dollars," he told me. "I'm going prospecting around among the islands awhile. See you later, Captain."

THAT was the way he disappeared from my sight.

Of course I heard of him now and again; skippers coming up from the South mentioned him, but nothing definite. And you remember that Mrs. Angell got a divorce before long on the ground of desertion, and that ended Lemuel Angell, so far as San Francisco was concerned. But I tried to keep a line on him. I heard that he was down in one of the lower groups. He had kept his name, all right, but I couldn't find out his lay.

Then I took the *Cecilia Thompson*—topsail schooner—out of San Francisco for Avatui, stopping at Honolulu for some mail and supplies. The first man I met on Fort Street was Angell.

"Hello!" he said cheerfully. "I've been waiting for you."

I looked him over. He was brown, hard as nails, and he carried himself like a seaman.

"Waiting for me?" I demanded.

"Sure. I heard you were stopping here a day or so. I want you to take me down to Loa. It's on your way."

We stood in the shade while I thought it over. Loa was away down, the chief island of that little group that old Macpherson got from the French. And as I thought, it occurred to me to ask a question:

"Is Macpherson still there?"

"No," he replied briefly. "I'm there."

"I understood he had a girl," said I.

"Certainly," he replied. "She's there now. I came up here for business reasons. Now I must get back. I sent the schooner to the Coast for trade goods."

We went to George's and had some luncheon. It reminded me of that luncheon at Jules'. Only Angell was different. I can't explain just why he was another man; but he impressed me as a person who could hold his own.

"Ever see the Coast papers?" I asked him presently.

"Yes," he responded. "My wife got a divorce. Poor Edith! I wasn't much of a husband, was I?"

"That's none of my business," I informed him. "What are you doing now?"

"I've told you," he returned. "I'm running old Macpherson's factory for the daughter. And between-whiles I run a schooner and pick up what I can."

"Your five thousand dollars?" I inquired.

"Twenty-five," he responded. "I was never built for an office."

"You look ten years younger."

He immediately became solemn. "You can't imagine—" he began, and was silent.

"Imagine what?" I demanded.

"The cost of it all," he said gravely. "To give up a home and a business and a wife—just to make good."

"You were well fixed in San Francisco," I replied.

He glanced at me. "Well, people said so. I understood they sympathize with Edith. But I was really no good. I

had missed such a lot." He leaned over the table confidentially: "I should have been a bankrupt in five years."

I was startled. "But you left her well fixed!"

"I did," he said, spreading his brown fingers out on the white cloth. "But—I couldn't stand for Jackson. He knew it. I didn't have the nerve to buck him. He would have broken me. So I quit."

"And now?" I suggested.

"Oh, you're going to take me down to Loa," he said softly. "I'll make it worth your while."

So I did. There was no resisting. The man had got on his feet and he didn't take any no's. A month later, the *Cecilia Thompson* slipped through the pass into the lagoon of Loa, and Angell himself anchored me about a hundred yards off the white-painted station.

THE hook had hardly taken the ground before a Whitehall boat slipped out from a little creek's mouth, with two natives rowing and a woman in the stern sheets.

"That's Miss Macpherson," Angell told me quietly. "She always has tea at four o'clock."

The gaffs were on the booms when the boat swung alongside. Lemuel stood by the starboard bulwarks, a fine figure of a man.

One word gave me the clue to it all. He stared down at the girl and said, "Elizabeth!"

She looked up at us with her clear gray eyes. And in that glance I saw that she was studying him. He returned that look steadily.

I can't precisely describe the girl to you. I should imagine she was twenty-odd: a big, rounded, smooth-cheeked woman. I know that she gave me the impression of competency, of very quiet thoughtfulness, of hidden passions.

"I'm glad to meet you, Captain," she said quietly. I noticed that her lips were full and that the curve of them was adorable.

"I've brought your factor down," I remarked.

"I have the mail," Angell added.

"And the business?" she demanded, brushing her hand over her hair.

"All settled," he returned. "I sent the schooner on up to the Coast with the stuff. I gave an order for more goods."

She turned abruptly and stared at the high, green peak of Loa. In her attitude I read doubt, hesitation. I noticed that her ankles were silken above her sandals.

You don't know the allure of some of these women. . . . She was perfect—a strong woman, fit to be any man's mate. And then she slowly stepped to the rail and called down to her natives:

"Please take Mr. Angell ashore."

Without a murmur of protest my former employer smiled and flung the mail-sack into the boat. He didn't even look at her. A moment afterwards he was being rowed swiftly ashore.

"Is there anything else for me?" she inquired calmly.

I explained how I had met Angell in Honolulu and consented for old times' sake to call at Loa.

"That was very nice of you," she remarked. "It is very lonely here."

HER attitude suddenly became one of sorrow, the inexorable and irremediable sadness that hovers over the solitary. "My father is dead," she murmured.

"And you feel that he is the only man you can depend on?" I demanded.

"I didn't know whether he was coming back," she replied.

"He persuaded me to bring him here," I returned.

She seemed thoughtful, and yet I will warrant that she was seeing but one thing. When she looked at me again it was with a strange air of detachment.

"You have known him long?" she asked.

For the second time I looked at her—respectfully, of course. She wore a low-necked white frock; her throat was firm, like ivory; her figure was that of a woman. Her gray eyes sought mine.

"I've known him for many years," I responded.

"Honest?" she whispered.

"He was too honest for his business."

She breathed deeply and said merely, "A-a-h!"

"He was married when I first knew him," I continued.



Angell got up and went out, evidently greatly perturbed. "You see, he is always remembering," she whispered. "That was why he wouldn't go on up to the Coast; he was afraid he might meet *her*."

"So he told me," she murmured. "And his wife?"

"She got a divorce," I said. "After he left."

"Then he left her?"

"I think he did," I responded. "But I'm not sure." Then I remembered what he had told me about the Jacksons. One couldn't be crooked with this fine girl. I put a good face on it.

"He never told me a word about that," she said.

"It is quite like him," I responded.

She laughed. "He is funny. Still."—she looked me right in the eye—"that is his fault. He is too honest. He tells everything; he has no secrets. A man shouldn't make all things plain. It spoils one's dreams."

"Well," I said awkwardly, "his wife got a divorce."

"He thought she would," was the response. "He insisted on letting her know that he was alive. That was silly. Why did he tell me? Why couldn't he just have come down here and forgotten?"

I didn't catch her meaning at first. She put one little foot up on the bar of the bits and studied me. "You see," she said with absolute simplicity, "I should like him to have forgotten."

"The other woman?" I demanded.

She nodded. "That," she said quietly, "is his fault. He cannot forget. Don't you feel sorry for him?"

"I do not," I returned boldly. "I envy him."

She did not blush but looked at me steadily. "You see, I can't marry him—while he is always bringing up the past and remembering. He might—he might remember—at night."

I confess that I was suddenly appalled. There was nothing to say. I called a couple of seamen and ordered the boat swung over.

So we went ashore.

A NATIVE girl brought us tea when we arrived at the house. It was oddly homelike in the windowless room, into which the fresh, warm Pacific breeze poured soundlessly. There were real teacups on a little table, white serviettes with the initial "M" on them, a fluffy

knit jacket for the pot and Elizabeth Macpherson demurely inquiring of us our preferences as to cream and sugar.

Angell glanced around appreciatively. He didn't say much; one could see that he was almost satisfied. Not quite. He wanted to talk to the girl with no one by to listen. She wished anything but that. She had been born and reared in the open, and that breeding brings about in one's manner two things that will never be understood in cities: a profound taciturnity as to little things and the capacity for being very confidential about real things without offense. Elizabeth, as I saw, didn't wish to be alone with Angell that afternoon. Instead, she insisted that I stay the night.

"The wind dies with the sun," she told me, "and in the morning you can sail nicely. We'll see you through the pass ourselves."

She gave me another cup of tea and looked at Lemuel. He smiled, a little sadly.

"I've missed you terribly, Boy," she murmured, putting the jacket on the pot again.

"Anything gone wrong?" he asked.

"Nothing," she returned.

"I hurried things through," he muttered. "I wanted to make the best bargains I could. Then I caught the *Cecilia Thompson*. I wasn't going to wait for the schooner to get back from the Coast."

"I thought you would go up to San Francisco yourself," was her next remark.

It seemed to fluster Angell. He murmured something about "not necessary" and "no use."

Miss Macpherson turned to me. Her color had risen and the faint glow on her cheeks gave her a peculiar and appealing beauty. "I am all alone," she said. "Since Father is gone,"—she glanced out towards the surf leaping in the pass, as if he had but just sailed for the other shore—"I have been very much alone."

"There's a missionary around here?" I asked bluntly.

She smiled lightly. "On the next island to the south. But I am not sure that I want to be married."

"What *do* you want?" I burst out.

She studied this. Angell got up and went out, evidently greatly perturbed.

"You see, he is always remembering," she whispered. "That was why he wouldn't go on up to the Coast; he was afraid he might meet *her*."

"You are wrong," I said with conviction. "Excuse my plain speaking, but I know better."

"He hasn't forgotten her," she insisted.

"Well, what is the way out of it?"

"I've thought it over a long while," she responded. "You know he came down here when Father was alive. Father said to me, 'There is a man who wants to forget.' Daddy died. And now—" She threw out her pale hands.

"But the man loves you!" I protested.

A swift and exquisite smile formed on her lips. She leaned across the table. "Are you sure?" she murmured.

And the instant she had said this she became shy. She wished no answer from me. Only one man may say those three words—one man, I tell you....in the dusk....

So I dawdled over my last cup of tea and took entirely too much milk in it. She observed this, in spite of her pre-occupation, and smiled.

"Nursery tea," she murmured and immediately flushed.

ANGELL stepped up on the porch and caught sight of the vivid color in her cheeks. His brown face was tinged with a faint carmine.

"Say—" he began, scowling.

"Boy, the skipper is going to stop on the island to-night," she interrupted quickly. "Can't you put him up in your quarters?"

"Come on," he said gruffly.

Once out under the palm trees he whirled on me. "What have you been telling her?" he demanded.

"I vouched for you as an honest man," I retorted. "She questioned me."

"Honest?" he repeated.

"Yes," I told him. "Honest. She thinks you are still in love with your wife and that—well, that you haven't been exactly honest. Not as to money. What's money? But—are you cheating?"

He stared at me with bright eyes, the glare of a man who is ready to fight. Then he laughed. "Man alive! you nearly scared me. She's only a girl. She doesn't understand."

"She's in love with you," I remarked.

"You shouldn't say that," he responded. "It's not fair to her. Who am I? Her manager, that's all. I'm worthless. I was to have gone up the Coast, and I didn't have the nerve. I couldn't face all the people again—nor Edith."

I looked at him. You'd have thought he had nerve for anything. But there was a little twitch to his upper lip that told me he was truthful.

"Huh!" I said. "Why is it that you fellows always find a perfectly good woman to care for you? And real men can travel around the world and a girl won't look at 'em."

"I don't know," he said, dull as dirt. "She's—she's too good for me."

"Of course!" I said roughly. "But can't you play up?"

For one instant I caught a glimpse of the man. "Would that be fair?" he demanded.

I WENT back to the house and Elizabeth met me with a smile. "Have you any tinned lobster on your ship?" she asked.

"I have," I said promptly, and in two minutes the small boat was off with orders to the cook to dig up everything he had in the way of ladies' edibles. Then we went up and sat down.

"I have come to a decision," she told me quietly. "I need your help, Captain."

"Anything I can do," I returned, "so long as it doesn't interfere with my duty to my owners."

"I'm going to buy your schooner," she said softly. "How much is it?"

I confess, now, that I drove a stiff bargain. Business is business, you know. When we had settled on the price and she had given me a draft on San Francisco she also gave me her hand. I was pleased, for she said, "You have treated me like a man. You've got six thousand too much for your cargo, but that goes to other people. You don't profit by it, I know. I like your nerve."

Then I knew that she and I would always get along right, together.

"What next?" I demanded.

"Land your cargo, fill your packet up with ballast and be ready to sail for Honolulu in a week. Supper will be ready in an hour."

In twenty minutes I had given the orders. I was back at the hour. Lemuel was pacing the floor, smoking furiously.

"What's all this?" he demanded.

"Dunno," says I. "Lady's orders."

"I'm the business manager of this outfit," he snarled. "You charged her ten thousand too much."

"She said six thousand," I answered, "—and invited me to supper."

Just at the moment she came in. She had again changed her gown and I gasped. She was dressed in a gorgeous affair made of feathers, the native kind of thing, you know. Her fine arms were bare and she had a light in her gray eyes. She sat down imperially and rapped gently on the table.

"Heavens!" I said to myself. "The man is mad." For he kept his gaze on the floor.

I don't remember what I ate. At the end of the meal, Angell got up and left us, without a word. Elizabeth smiled across the table.

"Now," she said, "I have made up my mind. We shall see." She rose magnificently. "I am going to win," she said.

CHAPTER II

WE sailed on a fine Sunday morning, with the natives chanting on the shore. Angell was silent and apparently much disturbed. Miss Macpherson, dressed in a clean white frock, coned the schooner through the pass. Once outside, she merely nodded to me and went below. For two weeks she stayed there. Her maid took her meals into her.

"Sick?" I asked Angell.

"I don't know what's up," he growled. He looked bitterly out over the sea. "I fancy this ends me," he remarked presently. That was all I got out of him.

When we made Honolulu, Elizabeth came up and glanced at the green hills and the cloud over the Pali.

"Lem," she said quietly, "I want you to buy whatever is necessary for a trip to San Francisco. I am going up to the hotel. You and the Captain will meet me at dinner."

When she was gone Angell stopped me in the saloon. "What is she going to do?" he demanded. "I wont go to the Coast."

"I understand that her father gave you a job and helped you make some money when you were down and out," I returned. "You're working for her. You've got to go."

"Or resign," he said in a low tone.

"Resign?" I told him. "Can you resign food and money and a fresh start? Can you resign a woman's faith and trust?"

"I did once," he muttered.

"Ah! your wife!" I replied. "Then she is right."

He started and an ugly look came into his eyes. "What about my wife?" he snarled.

"Nothing," says I. "Only that girl thinks you can never forget her. I suppose it's true. You've a fresh chance and you wont take it. Your wife got a divorce. Can't you get the voice that breathed o'er Eden out of your mind?"

"I'm no good," he said quietly. "It wouldn't be honest."

"Well," I told him, "I'm not going to dispute you. Just at present it's up to us to put on clean whites and take a hack to the hotel."

He went unwillingly enough, though I could see that the man was crazy to see her. He was one of those men that make love with their hands in their jacket pockets,—fools,—but the women give them their hearts.

WE found her at a table set back in a corner of the *lanai*. The band was playing in the court and a big crowd shuffled and laughed under the electric lights. Yet the moment we came out I realized that all the people were keeping their eyes on Elizabeth. She had on that native gown of feathers, and her eyes shone like stars. Her welcome was cordial to us.

It is a very good thing to sit at a table with a brilliant and dazzling woman; Angell's lean, brown face became elo-

quent of his admiration and affection. When she finally dismissed us for a smoke and to get the mail, he stopped and looked at her searchingly, his hands white-knuckled on the chair-back. She smiled up at him and then turned to me.

"I shall expect you back in half an hour, Captain," she said. "Lemuel can smoke two cigars."

When I was back—we strolled up to Emma Square—she was very still. At last she said, "I am going to take Lem up to the Coast to see his wife, Captain."

"But they are divorced?" I stammered.

"But he remembers." She sighed.

"There are so many things one remembers! And I must see for myself."

I argued uselessly. She was determined. Her final word was, "If he shows that he has forgotten, then I can be happy. I must see for myself."

Angell himself sat late in my room, smoking and pondering. I told him we sailed for San Francisco in two days. He swore he would not go. "Why bring it all up again?" he kept saying.

"For the girl's sake." I averred. "After all, she has a right to know that—that is all over."

"I swear—" he began and was silent.

I took him up on that. "You always halt in the wrong place. I fancy you have never finished that oath. You have never sworn to Miss Macpherson that everything is ended."

He glanced at me with a curious smile. "True," he said. "I must be honest. I don't know where I'm at... wholly at a loss."

"She knows," I told him. "You're navigator enough to work out a ship's position by the 'modified Sumner method.' You guess at your position, and then take two different angles. Your position is between them. You have one angle, right here. Go to San Francisco and take another sight. Then you'll be sure."

The next morning Angell was off early, attending to the ship's business. Miss Macpherson came down late. She seemed quite nervous and asked me a great many questions about how long it would take the *Cecilia Thompson* to reach the Coast. Then she plumped out with the big puzzle that worried her:

"I have never been in San Francisco,

Captain," she said. "I imagine—I'm tanned and I haven't been to a girls' school and maybe I don't dress right."

"You mean you are afraid of the women—of *her*?"

"She would dress better than I?" she suggested. "And she would know more."

She was so earnest that I didn't say anything. She sat opposite me in all the splendor of her beauty, her gray eyes clouded and her bosom heaving with restrained emotion. She loved the man with that strange and glorious passion that strong women are capable of. She managed to say just a little more:

"I understand him. He can do great things. I can help him... if he—"

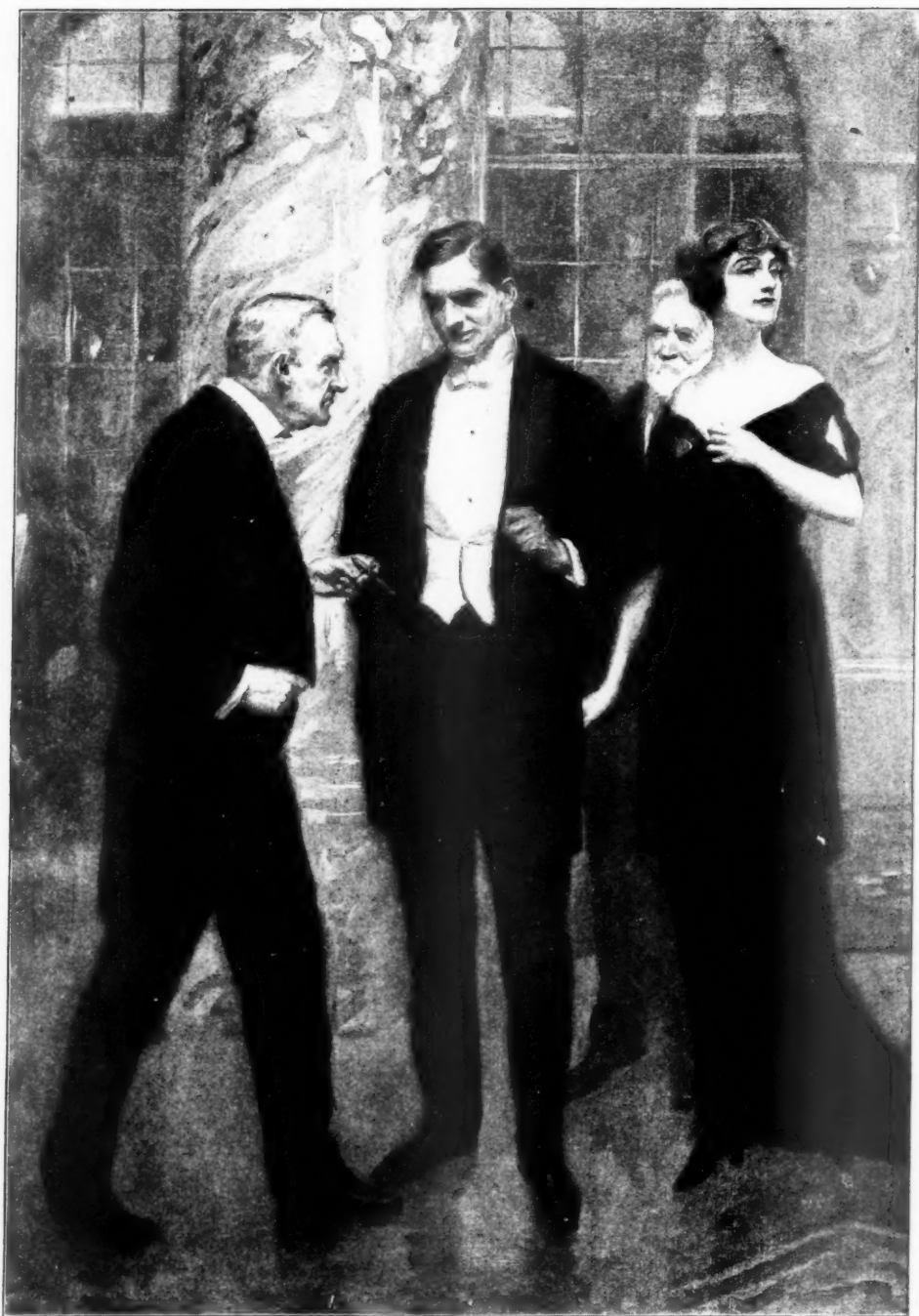
Funny? That woman was trying to save the soul of a man. I know that she realized his weakness, that pitiful and ridiculous impulse that he called "honesty." I am fairly certain that she knew him better than anyone else ever did, his childishness, his immense possibilities of achievement, the fact that another woman had scorned him. There was something barbaric in her prodigious and embracing affection for one whom our social life had been too much for, in her yearning to restore his manhood to one who had failed.

You and I know that most men would have taken the great gift of herself and her beauty. Possibly you and I would have accepted it carelessly. And Angell wouldn't. He could abandon a wife and friends and a career; but he couldn't bring himself to forget the past and enter on a new life with a gorgeous woman by his side. And all because of his strained and laughable sense of honesty. He had coldly surrendered when he found himself on the firing line, and still he could do a harder thing than fight old Jackson: he could master himself and his passion.

I THOUGHT it all over that day. I didn't see Angell. I suppose he was busy. That evening I went back to the hotel and found Elizabeth in the lounge.

"I'm expecting you both to dinner with me to-night," she murmured. "I've bought a new gown. See?"

I was already looking at it. It was a greenish black, showing her firm shoul-



The old man glared at him. "I'm still waiting to find out what a man who vanished from San Francisco under very suspicious circumstances was doing here. I don't propose to do business with you." I saw Edith suddenly flush and look at her former lover. Macpherson was silent, expressionless. Thus



picious circumstances has to do with this," he croaked. Angell laughed at him. "You are a crook," he said. "And we husband. She seemed puzzled. Her eyes sought an explanation from Elizabeth. Miss the battle between those two women was on.

ders and the round column of her neck—quite a gown—a little daring, in fact.

"I like it," I told her. "I expect he will soon be here."

He came at the moment. She stared. He was in full evening dress, gloved, carrying himself with a certain gravity.

"Why—why Lemuel!" she whispered. "I've never seen you dressed this way before!"

He stood before her and looked deep into her eyes. "In your honor," he said slowly. "And for another reason, Elizabeth."

"What other?" she asked, rising.

"Because my—the former Mrs. Angell is here," he went on. He turned to me. "She arrived this morning on the *Futura*. She does not know that I am here." Once again he addressed Miss Macpherson:

"You see, I don't want you to be—ashamed of me. These people lay lots of stress on clothes. It is important to me that you—well, that you know—"

"Know what, Boy?" she asked in a whisper.

He smiled faintly. "That I wish to do you honor." There he stopped. He went on in a moment, with a little backward toss of his head. "To-night I hope to make good, Elizabeth. If I do—"

She answered his look with one of sudden comprehension. We went in to dinner. And when we were seated she said simply, "Will you point her out to me?"

With a little gesture he indicated the next table. There sat Edith, perfectly composed, and studying the menu.

She had not changed a bit. And she had not seen us, I was sure.

"I suppose it would be best for me to speak to her," Angell said evenly. "Do you mind?"

Elizabeth flashed him a dazzling smile. "One should always speak to one's wife," she answered. You understand? She was no longer the Elizabeth Macpherson of Loa; she was a lady, entertaining two guests, quite at her ease, no longer yielding to emotion. And she added: "I should be glad to meet her."

Without a word more, Angell rose and went over to the next table, where he stood, with a polite smile on his face,

until Edith glanced up. I overheard the whole conversation.

"Lemuel!" she gasped, half rising.

"Don't get up," he said smoothly.

"May I sit down just a moment?"

She nodded, her face a mask. Then she asked, in the same formal tone that he had used, "Are you living here?"

"No. I'm just up from the South. And you?"

She looked at him appraisingly, ignoring his question. "I should hardly have known you," she remarked. "You have improved."

"Thank you," he returned soberly. "You haven't changed."

"You mean I haven't improved?" she retorted lightly. "One doesn't—we women."

He shook his head. "I didn't mean that," he said. "You are as lovely as ever."

It seemed to make her impatient. She glanced around the brightly lit *lanai* and suddenly smiled. It was old Jackson and his wife coming to join her. To my surprise Angell didn't move, but merely stiffened a little.

"You know Mr. Jackson, don't you?" demanded Edith, with a hard little smile.

"Oh, yes," said Angell genially. And he turned and greeted them as if there had been nothing strange in the past years. Jackson was the disturbed one. He stammered and growled and finally managed to mutter that he had "understood—"

"Don't let me interrupt your little party," Lemuel said coolly. "I am a guest of a lady here." He glanced at his former wife with an odd expression. "I think she will consent to meet you," he finished.

A silence, of course. Almost inexcusable, you might say. Yet there was justification. The three of them looked over at Miss Macpherson and said nothing. When Angell sat down with us again Elizabeth merely smiled gently. I tried to make conversation and failed.

IT was a long dinner. At the end of it Miss Macpherson rose and said, "I suppose you would like to talk with Mrs. Angell?"

"There is absolutely nothing to say,"

he returned. "But would you like to meet her? She is a very nice girl."

Elizabeth halted a second. I could see that she was trying to maintain her composure. Magnificent, I call it, the way she bowed and took his arm out of the *lanai*. I followed.

In the lounge, old man Jackson, his wife and Edith were chatting, evidently in a very constrained way. Without a bit of hesitation Lemuel walked up to them.

"Miss Macpherson," he said clearly, "let me introduce to you some former acquaintances of mine: Mrs. Jackson and Mr. Jackson." Here he stopped and flushed. "Also Mrs. Angell."

The old man was flustered. "Are you the daughter of Angus Macpherson?" he demanded.

"Certainly," she said quietly.

"I'm down here to buy your islands," he went on.

Elizabeth smiled. She looked at Edith. "I'm sorry," she said in her low, gentle voice, "but Mr. Angell has the chief interest in them. He can tell you better than I whether they are for sale."

Lemuel smiled the confident expression of a man who has found out where he stands. He looked Jackson straight in the eye. "I see," he said. "You need Loa in order to hold your monopoly."

The old man glared at him. "I'm still waiting to find out what a man who vanished from San Francisco under very suspicious circumstances has to do with this," he croaked.

Angell laughed at him. "You are a crook," he said. "And we don't propose to do business with you. You got me once—through no fault of my own. I'm done with you. Not a single schooner of yours can land on any island that we hold under the international agreement."

I saw Edith suddenly flush and look at her former husband. She seemed puzzled. Her eyes sought an explanation from Elizabeth. Miss Macpherson was silent, expressionless. Thus the battle between those two women was on.

What is the use of repeating all that Jackson said? He was beaten. And when the talk was over, Edith spoke:

"I think you ought to do this for Mr. Jackson. I am Mr. and Mrs. Jackson's guest."

"And I am Miss Macpherson's agent," he said quietly. He had come into his own.

Edith looked at the splendid creature that stood just behind him, and laughed. She held out her hand.

"You have done wonders in making a man of him," she said.

"I?" said Elizabeth quietly. "Oh, no. I merely found the man that was in him." They touched fingers.

Edith shook her head. "I'm quite happy now," she said simply. "I am married to Mr. Jackson's son. And you?"

Lemuel himself took it up. "Congratulations," he said clearly. He waved to a well-dressed and demure man who had just come in. "Enter!" he called. "Jackson, I'm glad to see you again."

"Oh," said the newcomer, clutching his hat.

But Lemuel paid no more attention to him. He turned to Elizabeth. It was easy to be seen that he had forgotten all but her.

"Now?" he whispered.

She stood there a shining and resplendent woman, her gray eyes given to him. Edith was a little forward of her, fingering a great diamond ring. Old man Jackson seemed suddenly paralyzed.

"Now?" repeated Angell, gently.

I didn't exactly understand the rest of it. Elizabeth swung on Edith and said, "Was there a child?"

"No," was the response, spoken in a whisper.

That was all. We left that motionless group and went into the open, under the flaming stars.

"And now?" Angell said again.

She drew her light wrap about her as if she were chilly.

"Home," she returned, with a smile.

MAIBON was silent awhile, mouthing his pipe. Then he started up from his swing-chair. "They were married that night," he growled at me. "I see by the papers that the present Mrs. Jackson gave a swell tea in the Palace Hotel."

"And Mrs. Angell?" I inquired.

"She was singing," he said. "It was over a cradle... two of them watching a cradle."



Brennan's Cream Colored Flannels

By Frederick R. Bechdolt

Co-author of "9009," author of "Lighthouse Tom," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LOUIS ROGERS

FOR fifty weeks in the year, Brennan was one of the keenest man hunters on the San Francisco force. This is the story of the other two weeks.

DETECTIVE BRENNAN strode into the office of the Identification Bureau. The indolent swagger, which marked him as an "upper office man," was lacking. Unmistakably he was in haste.

The blue clad officers on duty here looked up from their typewriters and card indices at this debonair young giant, as he hurried among them, importunity written on his handsome face. They greeted him as he went by; he answered only by a wave of one large

hand. His eyes were fixed on the sergeant in charge.

"Well, Tom, what's on your chest?" The sergeant put down the little wire-tipped pointer with which he had been counting the lines on a finger print, and looked up over his shoulder.

Brennan paused beside the roll-top desk. He saw the eyes of the other officers fixed on him. He smiled around on all of them, then down on the sergeant, a smile of ineffable complacency.

"Sorry for you lads, working here

these nice days." His smile widened. "And me just goin' home to get acquainted with my family."

"Going to turn in your tools, Tom? I thought you were strong with the commission." The Bertillon man stopped on his way to the measuring room long enough to deliver this sally.

Brennan continued spilling imperturbably. "Not yet. Vacation for me. Going to the country."

"Where you going this year, Tom?" The sergeant voiced inquiry for the others.

Brennan shook his head. "Sorry I can't tip the place off, Sergeant. You see,"—his manner became exaggeratedly confidential and included the entire room—"it's just a little village where a few of the best of us—bankers and business men, you know, boys—take our rest. And—you understand how it is, of course—if we let down the bars once, it would be common."

"Going to crush in with that fero dealer's front you're sporting to-day?" the Bertillon man inquired.

This sarcasm, which was directed toward Brennan's black-and-white striped raiment, brought joy to the rest of the room. But Brennan ignored it.

"To-morrow morning," he said slowly and impressively, "I show in white flannels, just like the lads down in Burlingame when they line up to watch a game of polo." He chuckled. "You ought to see me when I put that suit on. It took my wife a week to pick it out. When I get into it, they'll take me for somebody with a title and make me pay my hotel bill in advance."

He waved his hand at the departing Bertillon man and nodded to the others. His smile gave way to the former look of haste; he fumbled in his pocket.

"Here, Sergeant, before something breaks that they'll want me to look after." He laid a slip of paper on the desk. "That's the memorandum. That fellow Kelly, booked to me and Sullivan—I made him this afternoon. He and his pal blew out here from Chicago two weeks ago to tear off some of the country banks. We aint got a thing on him. All we can do is to show him to the watch and get him a floater."

He hurried on out, answering the good-by's which followed him.

Downstairs in the upper office, he was stowing away his revolver and handcuffs in his locker, when another well-groomed Titan tried to buttonhole him.

"That boxman, booked to you and Sullivan—I think I can put you wise to where you can get a line on his pal."

Brennan slammed the locker door and thrust his keys into his pocket.

"I don't want him." He saw the look of surprise on the other's face. "I'm through with this place for two weeks." He started for the door and strove to find words to express the extent of his emancipation.

"Listen, now," he said over his shoulder. "If I was to see a bunch of yeggs kicking their way into the Hibernia Bank to-night, do you know what I'd do?" He paused as if waiting for an answer; then: "I'd walk around the block and wish them good luck. I'm off to the country, and anyone that talks crooks to me from now until the first of September gets punched right in the eye."

With this declaration Brennan left his astonished associate in the Hall of Justice and hurried down Kearney Street to catch a car home.

It was the sixteenth of August. Until the morning of September first, Detective Sergeant Brennan was just Tom Brennan, or Daddy, according to what member of his family happened to be addressing him. The Hall of Justice would not know him.

For eleven months and sixteen days of the year he went every morning to that huge gray building through whose wide main entrance men and women pass in day-long procession, burdened with their own shame or with sorrow for the shame of others. Here he joined the pack of large, well-groomed man-hunters whose business it is to follow trails too devious for their fellows in blue and brass. Like all the others who worked out of the upper office, he had his specialty; he looked for faces to match the photographs and descriptions in the Identification Bureau. In that endless search he swaggered through crowded streets; he gossiped with offi-

cers from other cities, with prison wardens and with his own prisoners. He was immersed in the lore of thieves, familiar with their latest methods, master of their argot.

But, when that fifty weeks was up, he went to the country with his wife and two children. He talked plain, respectable English. Sophistication departed from his eyes.

On his way home this afternoon he stopped in a haberdasher's. He lingered there for some time, picking out three pairs of socks.

"Light blue," he told the clerk, and he was particular to see that he got the exact tint. For his wife had given him directions on this question of selection; and, though he was famed for fearlessness during the hours when he earned bread and butter for his family, Detective Sergeant Brennan lived in deep respect for Maggie's authority.

The next day he was lying on springy turf enjoying the earth's luxurious caress. He was gazing straight into a sky of deepest blue. He listened lazily to the voices of the two children.

They were riding an ancient and decrepit horse, whose name, he gathered from their adjurations, would be Moses. Brennan drank in their clamor as if it were to him sweet music. He sighed and stretched his great legs.

"Daddy, Moses *wont* go when we tell him to. He just eats grass."

"Kick him in the ribs." Brennan heaved another sigh. He sniffed the odor of crushed grass; he gazed deeper into the blue heavens. He told himself that *this* was living.

His ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps. A voice called his name. He sat up abruptly. Something like consternation showed on his face.

"Tom Brennan! Just look at your suit!"

"Hello, Maggie! Time you came!" His voice was heavily jovial. But he arose, doffed his coat and began brushing it industriously.

It was a coat of cream-colored flannel; and when he put it on again, Brennan loomed, a titanic symphony in cream, from the soles of his canvas shoes to the crown of the yachting cap which

exactly matched the two-piece suit. He stood, smiling on his wife. In that light raiment he looked larger than usual, too huge and lusty for such fragile fabric. Although the clothes fitted him well, it seemed somehow as if his big muscles must presently burst forth through them.

"All right now! No harm done." But there was apprehension in his eyes as he looked into her face. That face was modeled on round lines—altogether adorable!

"You've wrinkled the coat, and there's a grass stain!"

"Oh, come on! Say, let's take the kids swimming. It's long enough after lunch."

She smiled at his eagerness. "Come, children. Daddy's going to take you to the pool."

They scrambled off from the patriarchal Moses, whom they left grazing on the spot from which they had battled to move him. They seized Brennan by either hand. He laughed down at them. There was fondness in his eyes; for, in that khaki-clad young Indian chief, bedecked with feathers and fringes, he saw a replica in miniature of himself, and in the small chubby vision in blue rompers, he beheld a diminutive Maggie.

A few minutes later he emerged from the bathhouse, his bulging muscles gleaming splendidly in the afternoon sunshine. The bathing suit seemed about to crack over his great chest. Beside him, as nearly like their God had made them as was compatible with summer resort rules, the children shrieked their joy.

The bathing pool billowed from end to end when Tom Brennan hurled his mighty bulk down through the shimmering surface. Little breakers rolled shoreward, while he swam, first with his own miniature perched between his shoulders, then with the chubby baby clamoring shrilly on his broad back.

When they were climbing the hill to the hotel, Brennan felt his wife's small hand brushing the cream-colored coat.

"I'd rather wear my old clothes, Maggie." He fidgeted as she swept the garment with more vigorous strokes.

"They're more comfortable, and—"

"Wear them! Indeed you will wear

them, Tom Brennan! Do you think I'm going to let you go tearing round in *these?*"

"Well, you made me to-day. Ouch! Maggie! Say! People will think you're beating me." He made huge pretense of dodging, and the children laughed.

"Stand still! There! It wasn't a grass stain after all. I'm so glad. I hunted all over town for this suit. I wanted you to

the morrow and reveled in the freedom which those garments gave him—freedom to throw himself on the grass, to stride through thickets, to romp with the children like a huge boy.

Emancipation was complete with him. The work that he did for fifty weeks of every year was barely a memory. He knew none of its problems, none of its responsibilities. He was often conscious

A voice called his name. He sat up abruptly. "Tom Brennan, just look at your suit!"



wear it to-day—our first day here—so you'd look nice. But you're to keep them without a single spot; and when they have the dance at the hotel Saturday night—"

"Going to have a dance? Good!" He smiled happily.

"Yes; and you're going in this suit. Tom, and going to look the way you ought to."

So Brennan wore his old clothes on

of a lightness in his hip pockets, bereft of their old weight of grim "hardware."

He reveled in these lazy, carefree days—his vacation. The children made him companion or beast of burden as they willed. He picked flowers for them; he ferried them across the swimming pool; he carried them through the forest on his shoulders. And Maggie told him when to come home or what to wear.

There were occasions when he found

himself unwittingly in conflict with the ruling spirit of this happy kingdom:

A sunny morning when he allowed the chubby vision in blue rompers to feast on ice cream topped off by sticky confections from the village store—a morning followed by a noontide of colicky tears and stern reprimand.

A lazy afternoon when, urging the khaki-clad Indian chief to remount Moses—grown rebellious under importunities and of a sudden discovering that he still possessed one rheumatic buck—he heard the swish of skirts and saw Maggie bearing down on him with red cheeks and blazing eyes.

And the enormous occasion when he was caught letting his son roll on the dusty earth locked in physical combat with the heir of the railroad section foreman.

However, these were but passing breezes ruffling the surface of a tranquil pool. Brennan survived them, smiling in the grateful sensation of being a care-free subject where Maggie ruled. There was something in that sensation akin to the feeling of lightness in the hip pockets of that flannel suit, when he wore it during the evenings.

Often, when he lounged among the other summer visitors, gay in those cream-colored clothes, he saw Maggie's eye upon him, and he remembered to comport himself with sedulous care for that fabric.



The village police force resumed his post by the dining-room window.

So when Saturday evening came and the children were tucked away in bed, Brennan stood before his wife.

"I kept them clean, Maggie," he chuckled.

She tightened the knot of his tie, stepped back and looked him over.

"You were pretty good, Tom. And you'll be the best looking man in the whole dining-room to-night."

They went downstairs and joined the crowd of summer visitors on the floor of the large dining-room. They had danced until nearly midnight, when Fate so ordered things that Brennan saw Maggie's finger beckoning him to her side. She was

sitting by a woman from one of the bungalows from whose rent the village people derived a goodly portion of their sustenance.

"Mrs. Chisolm has forgotten her lace shawl," said Maggie, beaming up at him. "Will you get it for her, dear?"

And in a moment Brennan found himself with the key to the cottage and minute directions as to the location of the wrap in question.

He set forth at once. He was crossing the wide veranda of the hotel when he saw a little old man with bent shoulders and the brush-like tuft of chin-whiskers which used to be so much in evidence on the stage when "The Old Homestead" and kindred plays had their vogue.

"Evening, Chief." Brennan waved his hand.

The village police force acknowledged the salutation with gravity and resumed his post by the dining-room window, against whose panes he had been pressing the chin whisker, a rapt spectator during every "rag" dance of the evening.

Brennan hurried on down the long hill on whose summit the hotel was gleaming in flashing contrast to the sleeping town. Tall redwoods, survivors of the forest, loomed beside the road. The cool perfume of sweet peas and mignonette stole out from dooryard gardens, hidden in the darkness. His soul drank placidity from the soft, fragrant night.

He passed through the business part of the village. The windows were dark; no human being save himself was moving here. The general store, where ranchers from the surrounding country did their trading, the post office, the ice cream parlor, the bowling alley and the little bank which was the community's latest token of prosperity, were sound asleep.

He crossed the railroad track near the diminutive depot and reached the bungalow to which he had been directed. He entered, struck a match and found the lace shawl over the back of a chair.

As he was nearing the railroad track on his way back, Brennan heard the roar of the late evening passenger train from the city. He saw the glare of the head-light sweeping around a curve. Idle curiosity made him halt beside a clump of shrubbery near the end of the depot platform, to

watch one of the few daily events which interrupted the siesta of ordinary village existence.

The locomotive thundered to its stopping place; the brakes whined; the air began sobbing in the pipes. A mail sack thudded to the planking; the village postmaster picked it up and sauntered away with it. Five or six passengers had alighted and hurried off at once; the conductor was swinging his lantern; the locomotive had given its first enormous hiccup and was rumbling forward. A man swung off from the steps of the smoker.

For one brief, passing moment the face of this last arrival was sharply revealed in the glare from the car windows.

During that moment Brennan underwent a curious change. He bent low behind the clump of shrubbery. His great muscles had assumed a sudden rigidity which made them stand out under that flannel suit as though the light fabric were draped over metal instead of flesh. Sophistication had leaped back into his eyes.

The man was tall and broad, as large as Brennan; but there was nothing in his quick, nervous step—the pace of one who knows just where he is going and wants to reach that point without interruption—which would remotely suggest the slow swagger of an officer. The eyes roved, quick and cool. The lips drooped slightly at the ends.

When this other had disappeared in



For one brief, passing moment the face of this last arrival was revealed in the glare of the car windows.

the shadows beyond the depot, Brennan rose from his crouching posture. He turned his back on the station and hurried away.

His route to the hotel was different from that by which he had come. He avoided the brief stretch of business street. And when, at length, he stepped on the broad veranda, his face had lost its sunny freshness. His demeanor was business-like. Instead of going on into the dining-room with the lace shawl, which he was carrying across his arm, he stood looking about him with that same unobtrusive keenness which his eyes held on the street during fifty weeks of every year.

The night clerk, resplendent in a cut-away and white linen in honor of the evening's festivities, was making good headway with two man-hungry summer girls when Brennan caught his eye.

"The chief?" The night clerk smiled, repeating Brennan's query. "Why, let me see. Oh yes. He went up the ridge road taking two old ladies home. Anything happened?"

Brennan shook his head and returned the smile with the apparent carelessness of one to whom dissembling is second nature. But, when he had got out of sight, he stuffed the lace shawl into a pocket of his flannel coat and hurried along the road which traversed the summit of the hill.

He had gone a full half mile, every yard of which brought from him its own separate anathema, when he saw a wavering little circle of light coming to meet him. He sighed with relief.

The village police force, returning from his duty as esquire of ancient dames, turned his flash lantern into Brennan's eyes with all the ardor of the enthusiastic man-hunter to whom all comers are suspicious.

"Well, Chief,"—Brennan blinked into the dazzling rays—"it's only me."

The radiance vanished. Brennan was able to see the tuft of chin-whiskers thrust forward belligerently.

"Been some young fellers pesterin' round the summer cottages. I didn't know but what ye might be one o' them."

Brennan nodded. "Chief," he began

abruptly, "have you seen a party round here lately—little under medium size, black haired, got a scar on his right cheek?"

Silence followed. The tuft of chin whisker wagged ruminatively. And Brennan chafed, waiting.

"I do mind thet feller. He come last week and stayed three days. Me and him was talkin' in the store. He was thinkin' of buyin' a place; said his wife was poorly. He was—"

Brennan breathed deeply. "Do you pack a gun?" He shot the question.

"What ye drivin' at?" The tuft of whisker was horizontal again.

Brennan fumbled in the breast pocket of his flannel coat and produced his star. He held it out while the ancient guardian of the village peace brought his flashlight into play again.

"Oho!" The light winked out. "Glad to know ye, I'm sure." The horny old palm met Brennan's.

"Now! About that gun!" Brennan demanded when he had complied with the amenities as quickly as possible.

The little man was groping under the tails of his long coat. With a slowness that was maddening to Brennan, he drew forth a pistol whose enormous length and remarkable lines proclaimed it as the weapon of a bygone generation.

"I'll take it, if you don't mind. Come on, Chief."

Brennan started swiftly toward the town. The other followed, voicing alternate wonder and protest. Once only did Brennan speak and that was to ask concerning the ponderous firearm which he was carrying in his right hand.

"Shoot?" The old watchman echoed quaveringly. "Why, I killed Bill Sampson's dog with it five year' ago. Knocked him galley west the second shot. The fust would 've got him, but the blamed ca'tridge missed fire."

Brennan withheld comment on that past performance. His eyes had a far-away expression. His thoughts were with his own late model revolver, reposing with his handcuffs in the locker at the Hall of Justice.

He strode down the hill; in the darkness his companion stumbled behind him, putting such questions as his scanty

breath allowed. To these Brennan gave one answer.

"Hurry, Chief."

They had reached the foot of the slope and were close to the business part of the village when a heavy, hollow detonation sounded somewhere ahead of them, a noise so vague that it seemed to have no exact location.

"What the dickens—" The little watchman looked up into Brennan's face. They had come to a halt side by side.

"That fireproof safe that your bank

blows, the unmistakable chink of metal beating metal. A vague blur of light oozed through the windows of the little building, less than one hundred feet ahead of him.

Within that luminous area a man appeared. He sprang from a shadow so abruptly that he seemed to have leaped out of the earth. In that instant he showed plainly, a man of ordinary size, with a long, livid scar upon his cheek. His head went forward; he raised his right arm with a jerk. The light from the windows glinted along the black



A man burst through the front door, head bowed, swinging a revolver in his right hand.

keeps its money in—" Brennan's voice was laden with scorn. "I knew that he'd beat that box before we got here. Now, Chief, we got to hurry. These are swift people."

At once Brennan started forward. His bearing had changed. He was walking toward the bank, with the deliberation of one going on a straight line from which he will never swerve. His shoulders were swaying. He swaggered down the middle of the road.

Into the silence of the night—a silence seeming deeper than ever after that explosion—came the sound of sharp

barrel of the revolver which he aimed.

Brennan's face became heavy, implacable. "Drop that gun. I'm an officer." It was the voice of one who believes implicitly in his authority. He came on; his swagger was superb. As if all the grim panoply of the law—steel fetters, stone walls and solemn court rooms—came with him now, he walked like one invulnerable.

A flash of orange leaped toward him from the sidewalk. A bullet snarled above his head. The venomous spat of a smokeless powder cartridge completed the reply to his command. Even as Bren-

nan raised the ancient revolver he came on in that uncompromising straight line, at the same proud swagger. Then—

Brennan pulled the rusty trigger. An appalling roar arose upon the night air. A cloud of acrid smoke enwrapped him. As he walked on, he gave one wondering glance at his weapon, then raised his eyes again and took new aim.

The automatic was spitting from the sidewalk now, so swiftly that the reports sounded like the blows of a riveting hammer. A bullet threw dirt upon the legs of Brennan's flannel trousers. Another tugged at his coat like an importunate hand. He pressed the trigger of his archaic firearm. A dull click followed.

Once more Brennan looked down at the ancient pistol, and this time he frowned. Then his face resumed its expression of heavy implacability and he gazed before him as he went on at unchanged pace.

His eyes swept along the barrel; his forefinger crooked to tightness. The venerable pistol bellowed. The man upon the sidewalk pitched forward; his automatic clattered on the planks beside him.

The blur of light vanished. Footsteps sounded within the bank.

Abruptly Brennan changed his pace. He ran straight toward the door of the little building.

"Look after that one on the sidewalk," he shouted. Ignoring the wounded man, nor looking to see whether the old watchman was obeying, Brennan kept on running. He reached the edge of the walk.

A man burst through the front door, head bowed, swinging a revolver in his right hand.

The weapon barked once, as Brennan leaped forward. The two big bodies



Detective Sergeant Brennan was standing in abject fear while Maggie's eyes went over him from head to foot.

crashed together in collision. For an instant they seemed to totter. They swayed; then, locked by intertwining limbs, they fell heavily upon the sidewalk.

They rolled across the boards into the roadway. They seemed to bound from the earth. Dust enwrapped them. The thud of a fist striking bare flesh sounded in the noises of the struggle.

Abruptly the two forms separated. One shot upward into a crouching posture.

Brennan's huge knees were pinning down the arms of his prisoner. His hands were pressing hard upon the man's throat.

"Drop it," he said quietly.

The automatic pistol fell into the gutter.

"Now Kelly,"—Brennan arose—"get up. You're under arrest." His voice was stern. There was a ring in it, as when one greets an acquaintance of other days.

Standing on his feet, the prisoner surveyed his captor for the first time and growled profane disgust.

"I kept my word and blew when I got my floater." His voice rose in indignant protest. "Why can't yo' let me alone? I aint botherin' *your* town."

It took some time to find a doctor for the wounded man, and Brennan was out of breath from hurrying, when he stepped on the wide veranda of the hotel. He walked straight across the porch, and on to the door of the dining-room. The orchestra was playing the last waltz.

Brennan stood in the wide doorway. The lace shawl was again across his

arm; his eyes were searching among the dancers and those sitting around the sides of the room. Suddenly they lighted and he stepped forward.

He started around the room toward the chair which Maggie occupied. He was walking briskly; his shoulders were swaying with that same superb swagger, that swing of utter confidence, which he had maintained when he strode through revolver smoke toward the little bank.

Something—perhaps it was the eyes of a dancer—made him glance down over himself. Abruptly he paused.

He seemed to waver. He stood thus for a full moment, hesitating. Then he went on. But the proud swagger was gone and for the first time that evening Brennan's feet seemed reluctant to obey his will.

Out on the veranda the village police force was recounting the details of the capture. He was emblazoning his glory with such bits of wisdom as he had picked up from Brennan's conversation with the prisoners.

"Got 'em both," he was saying. "Soup-man and stick-up. Got 'em dead to rights, snuffin' the box. Yes sir! God-darned if we didn't!"

His tuft of chin whisker wagged bravely. Confidence shone on his wizened features.

But Detective Sergeant Brennan was standing in abject fear while Maggie's eyes went over him from head to foot—over the cream colored suit, torn now, covered with dust from the road, spotted with blood. And, in abject fear he cringed, when Maggie said slowly:

"Tom—Brennan! Look—at—that—suit!"

It's the unusual story that wins these days—the old-time, cut-and-dried fiction wont go. Don't miss "The Heart of Harno Shan," by James Francis Dwyer, in the October Red Book, on the news-stands September 23rd.

The Preceding Installments of the New Novel by the Author of the "Kazan" Stories

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD, student of the far North, has found knighthood still in flower up there in "God's Country." It is near the rim of the Arctic where you first meet his knight and the beautiful woman, daughter of a descendant of one of those English nobles who came out to the new world some three hundred years ago to hunt the ermine for royalty.

Philip Weyman is an American doing government research. After two years he starts south for home. He stops one autumn day six hundred miles north of the nearest town, to cook his meager lunch. There he comes on a wonderful girl of pure English type, combing her shining hair by the side of a pool.

The girl is terror stricken. But Weyman's manner is straightforward, and when he tells her he is from the North, she is strangely reassured and Weyman sees her terror was for more than him. He asks the meaning of her fear and she confides that she is hiding from an enemy. He begs her to tell him her trouble.

"Would you do a great deal for me—like a man?" she asks.

He bows his head. And after a long conversation has led the girl to have full confidence in Weyman's trustworthiness, she tells him what she wants him to do. He is to assume the name Philip Paul Darcambal, go back to her home with her and pose as her husband. He is to protect her, to fight for her blindly. He is never to ask the reason, and in the end, when his service has been complete, he is to go into the woods and die—to her and those who know her.

Philip is staggered. But his captivation by the beauty and charm of this wondrous forest girl is so complete that he accepts.

Canoes paddled by Indians, come to fetch the girl home. She insists on meeting the leader of the party, Jean Jacques Croisset, a half-breed, alone. After a few words, Jean goes to Philip and says significantly:

"I am glad it is you that chance sent us, M'sieur Weyman. Our Josephine trusts you as she would not one in a million." Then with glittering eyes: "And for you—death, unless you play your part like a man."

The party of mystery sets off, Josephine in Philip's canoe and the watchful Jean following.

For two days and nights they travel through wild forest lakes. Josephine tells Philip she is the daughter of John Adare, of Adare House, a mansion in the wilderness. It is at Adare House that "Something will happen that will turn your heart to stone and ice," Jean Croisset warns Weyman the last day of the trip; and he adds, "It is coming to-night."

As they land, fifty huskies bound for Josephine. They are her forest body-guard. At Adare House, Weyman does not meet anyone. He is assigned to a luxurious room and his supper brought to him there. He turns toward the window, and sees a face distorted with murderous hate peering at him—the face of Jean Croisset.

The mysteries of Adare House increase. Philip runs out to find Croisset and stumbles onto Josephine. Her manner is agitated. She tells him her father and mother are arriving unexpectedly, and the time to tell him her secret has come. She leads him to her room, where a lovely baby is sleeping. "You remember I told you I spent one year in Montreal," she says with bowed head. "It is my baby." Philip is dazed, but somehow has a feeling her story cannot be true. His adoration does not wane. "I love you," he answers.

Then comes John Adare and his wife, Miriam. Adare is a splendid giant, and his wife is beautiful. Adare's eyes follow her with worship, but between Josephine and her mother Philip notices a coldness. Adare accepts him whole-heartedly as Josephine's North-exploring husband whom he has never seen, but the wife makes him suspect she knows Josephine's secret.

Philip goes soon to his room. A rifle ball whizzes through the window and grazes his arm. Again he rushes out, sure his assailant is Croisset, and comes on his man in the edge of the forest. The half-breed fells him with a whip stock and makes away. Philip staggers back to his room and the mystery of the night is complete, for seated there at a table and looking calmly at him is Jean Jacques Croisset.

God's Country— and the Woman



Jean
Jacques
Croisset

A SPLENDID NEW NOVEL OF THE NORTH
BY THE AUTHOR OF THE FAMOUS "KAZAN" STORIES

By James Oliver Curwood

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

CHAPTER XII

UNABLE to believe that what he saw was not an illusion, Philip stood and stared at the half-breed. No word fell from his lips. He did not move. And Jean met his eyes calmly, without betraying a tremor of excitement or of fear. In another moment Philip's hand went to his pistol. As he half drew it, his confused brain saw other things which made him gasp with new wonder.

Croisset showed no signs of the fight in the forest which had occurred not more than ten minutes before. He was wearing a pair of laced Hudson's Bay boots. In the struggle in the snow Philip's hand had once gripped his enemy's foot, and he knew that the man had worn moccasins. And Jean was not winded. He was breathing easily. And now Philip saw that behind the calmness in his eyes there was a tense and anxious inquiry. Slowly the truth broke upon him. It could not have been Jean with whom he had fought in the edge of the forest! He advanced a step or two to-

ward the half-breed, his hand still resting uncertainly on his pistol. Not until then did Jean speak, and there was no pretense in his voice.

"The Virgin be praised, you are not badly hurt, m'sieur," he exclaimed, rising. "There is a little blood on your face. Did the glass cut you?"

"No," said Philip. "I overtook him in the edge of the forest."

Not for an instant had his eyes left Croisset. Now he saw him start. His dark face took on a strange pallor. He leaned forward, and his breath came in a quick gasp.

"The result?" he demanded. "Did you kill him?"

"He escaped."

The tense lines in Croisset's face relaxed. Philip turned and bolted the door.

"Sit down, Croisset," he commanded. "You and I are going to square things up in this room to-night. It is quite natural that you should be glad he escaped. Perhaps if you had fired the shot in place of putting the affair into the hands of a hired murderer the work would have been better done. Sit down!"

Something like a smile flickered across Jean's face as he reseated himself. There was in it no suggestion of bravado or of defiance. It was rather the facial expression of one who was looking beyond Philip's set jaws, and seeing other things—the betrayal which comes at times when one has suffered quietly for another. It was a look which made Philip uneasy as he seated himself opposite the half-breed, and made him ashamed of the fact that he had exposed his right hand on the table, with the muzzle of his automatic turned toward Jean's breast. Yet he was determined to have it out with Jean now.

"You are glad that the man who tried to kill me escaped?" he repeated.

The promptness and quiet decisiveness of Jean's answer amazed him.

"Yes, m'sieur, I am. But the shot was not for you. It was intended for the master of Adare House. When I heard the shot to-night I did not know what it meant. A little later I came to your room and found the broken window and the bullet mark in the wall. This is M'sieur Adare's old room, and the bullet was intended for him. And now, M'sieur Philip, why do you say that I am responsible for the attempt to kill you, or the master?"

"You have convicted yourself," declared Philip, his eyes ablaze. "A moment ago you said you were glad the assassin escaped!"

"I am, m'sieur," replied Jean in the same quiet voice. "Why I am glad I will leave to your own imagination. Unless I still had faith in you and was sure of your great love for our Josephine, I would have lied to you. You were told that you would meet with strange things at Adare House. You gave your oath that you would make no effort to discover the secret which is guarded here. And this early, the first night, you threaten me at the end of a pistol!"

Like fire, Jean's eyes were burning



now. He gripped the edges of the table, and his voice came with a sudden hissing fury.

"By the great God in Heaven, m'sieur, are you accusing me of turning traitor to the Master and to Josephine, whom I have guarded since the day she first opened her eyes to the world? Do you accuse me of that—me, Jean Jacques Croisset, who would die a thousand deaths for her?"

He leaned over the table, as if about to spring. And then, slowly, his fingers relaxed; the fire died out of his eyes, and he sank back in his chair. In the face of the half-breed's outburst Philip had remained speechless. Now he spoke.

"Call it threatening, if you like. I do not intend to break my word to Josephine. I demand no answer to questions which may concern her, for that is my promise. But between you and me there are certain things which must be explained. I concede that I was mistaken in believing that it was you with whom I fought in the forest. But it was you who looked through my window earlier in the night, with a pistol in your hand. You would have killed me if I had not turned."

Genuine surprise shot into Jean's face.

"I have not been near your window, m'sieur. Until I returned with M'sieur Adare I was waiting up the river, several miles from here. Since then I have not left the house. Josephine and her father can tell you this, if you need proof."

"Your words are impossible!" ex-

claimed Philip. "I could not have been mistaken. It was you."

"Will you believe Josephine, m'sieur? She will tell you that I could not have been at the window."

"If it was not you—who was it?"

"It must have been the man who shot at you," replied Jean.

"And you know who that man is, and yet refuse to tell me in order that he may have another opportunity of finishing what he failed to do to-night. The most I can do is to inform John Adare."

"You will not do that," said Jean confidently. Again he showed excitement. "Do you know what it would mean?" he demanded.

"Trouble for you," volunteered Philip.



Unable to believe that what he saw was not an illusion, Philip stood and stared at the half-breed. No word fell from his lips. He did not move. And Jean met his eyes calmly, without betraying a tremor of excitement or of fear. Philip's hand went to his pistol.

"And ruin for Josephine and every soul in the House of Adare!" added Croisset swiftly. "As soon as Adare could lace his moccasins, he would take up that trail out there. He would come to the end of it, and then—*mon Dieu!*—in that hour the world would smash about his ears!"

"Either you are mad or I am," gasped Philip, staring into the half-breed's tense face. "I don't think you are lying, Jean. But you must be mad. And I am mad for listening to you. You insist on giving this murderer another chance. You as much as say that by giving him a second opportunity to kill John Adare you are proving your loyalty to Josephine and her father. Can that be anything but madness?"

An almost gentle smile flickered over Jean's lips. He looked at Philip as if marveling that the other could not understand.

"Within an hour it will be Jean Jacques Croisset who will take up the trail," he replied softly, and without boastfulness. "It is I, and not the master of Adare House, who will come to the end of that trail. And there will be no other shot after that, and no one will ever know—but you and me."

"You mean that you will follow and kill him—and that John Adare must never know that an attempt has been made on his life?"

"He must never know, m'sieur. And what happens in the forest at the end of the trail the trees will never tell."

"And the reason for this secrecy you will not confide in me?"

"I dare not, m'sieur."

Philip leaned across the table.

"Perhaps you will, Jean, when you know there is no longer anything between Josephine and me," he said. "To-night she told me everything. I have seen the baby. Her secret she has given to me freely—and it has made no difference. I love her. To-morrow I shall ask her to end all this make-believe, and my heart tells me that she will. We can be married secretly. No one will ever know."

His face was filled with the flush of hope. One of his hands caught Jean's in

the old grip of friendship—of confidence. Jean did not reply. But his face betrayed what he did not speak. Once or twice before, Philip had seen the same look of anguish in his eyes, the tightening of the lines about the corners of his mouth. Slowly the half-breed rose from the table, and turned a little from Philip. In a moment Philip was at his side.

"Jean!" he cried softly. "You love Josephine!"

No sign of passion was in Jean's face as he met the other's eyes.

"How do you mean, m'sieur?" he asked quietly. "As a father and a brother, or as a man?"

"A man," said Philip.

Jean smiled. It was a smile of deep understanding, as if suddenly there had burst upon him a light which he had not seen before.

"I love her as the flowers love the sunshine, as the wood violets love the rains," he said, touching Philip's arm. "And that, m'sieur, is not what you understand as the love of a man. There is one other whom I love in another way, whose voice is the sweetest music in the world, whose heart beats with mine, whose soul leads me day and night through the forests, and who whispers to me of our sweet love in my dreams—Iowaka, my wife! Come, m'sieur; I will take you to her."

"It is late—too late," voiced Philip wonderingly.

But as he spoke, he followed Jean. The half-breed seemed to have risen out of his world now. There was a wonderful light in his face, a something that seemed to reach back through centuries that were gone—and in this moment Philip thought of Marechal, of Prince Rupert, of le Chevalier Grosselier—of the adventurous and royal blood that had first come over to the New World to form the Great Company, and he knew that of such men as these was Jean Jacques Croisset, the forest man. He understood now the meaning of the soft and faultless speech of this man who had lived always under the stars and the open skies. He was not of to-day, but a harkening back to that long forgotten yesterday; in his veins ran the

blood, red and strong, of the First Men of the North. Out into the night Philip followed him, bare-headed, with the moonlight streaming down from above; and he stopped only when Jean stopped, close to a little plot where a dozen wooden crosses stood above a dozen snow-covered mounds.

Jean stopped, and his hand fell on Philip's arm.

"These are Josephine's," he said softly, with a sweep of his other hand. "She calls it her Garden of Little Flowers. They are children, m'sieur. Some are babies. When a little one dies—if it is not too far away—she brings it to *Le Jardin*—her garden, so that it may not sleep alone under the lonely spruce, with the wolves howling over it on winter nights. They must be lonely in the woody graves, she says. I have known her to bring an Indian baby a hundred miles, and some of these I have seen die in her arms, while she crooned to them a song of Heaven. And five times as many little ones she has saved, m'sieur. That is why even the winds in the tree-tops whisper her name, *L'Ange!* Does it not seem to you that even the moon shines brighter here upon these little mounds and the crosses?"

"Yes," breathed Philip reverently.

Jean pointed to a larger mound, the one guardian mound of them all, rising a little above the others, its cross lifted watchfully above the other crosses; and he said, as if the spirits themselves were listening to him:

"M'sieur, there is my wife, my Iowaka. She died three years ago, but she is with me always, and even now her beloved voice is singing in my heart, telling me that it is not black and cold where she and the little ones are waiting, but that all is light and beautiful. M'sieur,"—his voice drooped to a whisper—"could I sell my hereafter with her for the price of another woman's love on earth?"

Philip tried to speak; and after a moment he succeeded in saying:

"Jean, an hour ago, I thought I was a man. I see how far short of that I have fallen. Forgive me, and let me be your brother. Such a love as yours is my

love for Josephine. And to-morrow—"

"Despair will open up and swallow you to the depths of your soul," interrupted Jean gently. "Return to your room, m'sieur. Sleep. Fight for the love that will be yours in Heaven, as I live for my Iowaka's. For that love will be yours, up there. Josephine has loved but one man, and that is you. I have watched and I have seen. But in this world she can never be more to you than she is now, for what she told you to-night is the least of the terrible thing that is eating away her soul on earth. Good night, m'sieur!"

Straight out into the moonlight Jean walked, head erect, in the face of the forest. And Philip stood looking after him over the little garden of crosses until he had disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII

ALONE and with the deadening depression that had come with Jean's last words, Philip returned to his room. He had made no effort to follow the half-breed who had shamed him to the quick beside the grave of his wife. He felt no pleasure, no sense of exultation, that his suspicions of Croisset's feelings toward Josephine had been dispelled. Since the hour MacTavish had died up in the madness of the Arctic night, deep and hopeless gloom had not laid its hand more heavily upon him.

He bolted his door, drew the curtain to the window, and added a bit of wood to the few embers that still remained alive in the grate. Then he sat down, with his face to the fire. The dry birch burst into flame, and for half an hour he sat staring into it with almost unseeing eyes. He knew that Jean would keep his word—that even now he was possibly on the fresh trail that led through the forest. For him there was something about the half-breed now that was almost omniscient. In him Philip had seen incarnated the things which had made him feel like a dwarf in manhood. In those few moments close to the graves, Jean had risen above the world. And Philip believed in him. Yet with this belief his optimism did not quite die.

In the same breath Jean had told him that he could never possess Josephine, and that Josephine loved him. This in itself, Jean's assurance of her love, was sufficient to rouse a spirit like his with

new hope. At last he went to bed, and in spite of his mental and physical excite-



"Thirty-five miles to the north and west of us there is a free trader's house," said Adare. "It's the one criminal rendezvous I know of in all this North country."

ment of the night, it was not long before he fell asleep.

JOHN ADARE did not fail in his promise to rouse Philip early in the day. When Philip jumped out of bed in response to Adare's heavy knock at the door, he judged that it was not later than seven o'clock, and the room was still dark. Adare's voice came booming through the thick panels in reply to Philip's assurance that he was getting up.

"This is the third time," he cried. "I've cracked the door trying to rouse you. And we've got a caribou porterhouse two inches thick waiting for us."

The giant was walking back and forth in the big living-room when Philip joined him a few minutes later. He wore an Indian-made jacket and was smoking a big pipe. That he had been up for some time was evident from the logs fully ablaze in the fireplace. He rubbed his hands briskly as Philip entered. Every atom of him disseminated good cheer.

"You don't know how good it seems to get back home," he exclaimed as they shook hands. "I feel like a boy—actually like a boy, Philip! Didn't sleep two winks after I went to bed, and Miriam scolded me for keeping her awake. Bless my soul, I wouldn't live in Montreal if they'd make me a present of the whole Hudson's Bay Company."

"Nor I," said Philip. "I love the North."

"How long have you lived in the North?"

"Four years—without a break."

"One can live a long time in the North in four years," mused the master of Adare. "But Josephine said that she met you in Montreal?"

"True," laughed Philip, catching himself. "That was a break—and I thank God for it. Outside of that I spent all of the four years north of the Height of Land. For eighteen months I lived along the edge of the Arctic, trying to take an impossible census of the Eskimo for the Government."

"I knew something of the sort when I first looked at you," said Adare. "I

can tell an Arctic man, just as I can pick a Herschel dog or an Athabasca country *malemute* from a pack of fifty. We have much to talk about, my boy. We will be great friends. Just now we are going to that caribou steak."

Out into the hall, through another door, and down a short corridor he led Philip. Here a third door was open, and Adare stood aside while Philip entered.

"This is my private sanctuary," he said proudly. "What do you think of it?"

Philip looked about him. He was in a room almost as large as the one from which they had come. In a huge fireplace a pile of logs was blazing. One end of the room was given up almost entirely to shelves and weighted down with books. Philip was amazed at their number. The other end was still partially hidden in gloom, but he could make out that it was fitted up as a laboratory, and on shelves he caught the white gleam of scores of wild beast skulls. Comfortably near to the fire was a large table scattered with books, papers and piles of manuscript, and behind this was a small iron safe. Here, Philip thought, was the adytum of no ordinary man; it was the study of a scholar and a scientist. He marked the absence of mounted heads from the walls, but in spite of that the very atmosphere of the room breathed of the forests and the beast. Here and there he saw the articulated skeletons of wild animals. From among the books themselves the jaws and ivory fangs of skulls gleamed out at him. Before he had finished his wondering survey of the strange room, John Adare picked up a skull from the table.

"This is my latest specimen," he said, his voice eager with enthusiasm. "It is perfect. Jean secured it for me while I was away. It is the skull of a beaver, and shows in three distinct and remarkable gradations how nature replaces the soft enamel as it is worn from the beaver's teeth. You see, I am a hobbyist. For twenty years I have been studying wild animals. And there—"

He replaced the skull on the table to point to an isolated shelf filled with books and magazines.

"There is my most remarkable collection," he added, a gleam of humor in his eyes. "They are the books and magazine stories of nature fakirs, the 'works' of naturalists who have never heard the howl of a wolf or the cry of a loon; the wild dreams of fictionists, the rot of writers who spend two weeks or a month each year on some blazed trail and return to the cities to call themselves students of nature. When I feel in bad humor I read some of that stuff, and laugh."

He leaned over to press a button under the table.

"One of my little electrical arrangements," he explained. "That will bring our breakfast. To use a popular expression of the uninformed, I'm as hungry as a bear. As a matter of fact, you know, a bear is the lightest eater of all brute creation for his size, strength, and fat supply. That row of naturalists over there have made him out a pig. The beast's a genius, for it takes a genius to grow fat on poplar buds!"

Then he laughed good humoredly.

"I suppose you are tired of this already. Josephine has probably been filling you with a lot of my foolishness. She says that I must be silly or I would have my stuff published in books. But I am waiting, waiting until I have come down to the last facts. I am experimenting now with the black and the silver fox. And there are many other experiments to come, many of them. But you are tired of this."

"Tired?"

Philip had listened to him without speaking. In this room John Adare had changed. In him he saw now the living, breathing soul of the wild. His own face was flushed with a new enthusiasm as he replied.

"Such things could never tire me. I only ask that I may be your companion in your researches, and learn something of the wonders which you must already have discovered. You have studied wild animals—for twenty years?"

"Twenty and four, day and night."

"And you have written about them?"

"A score of volumes, if they were in print."

Philip drew a deep breath.

"The world would give a great deal for what you know," he said. "It would give a great deal for those books, more than I dare to estimate; undoubtedly it would be a vast sum in dollars."

Adare laughed softly in his beard.

"And what would I do with dollars?" he asked. "I have sufficient with which to live this life here. What more could money bring me? I am the happiest man in the world!"

For a moment a cloud overshadowed his face.

"And yet of late I have had a worry," he added thoughtfully. "It is because of Miriam, my wife. She is not well. I had hoped that the doctors in Montreal would help her. But they have failed. They say she possesses no malady, no sickness that they can discover. And yet she is not the old Miriam. God knows I hope the tonic of the snows will bring her back to health this winter!"

"It will," declared Philip. "The signs point to a glorious winter, crisp and dry—the sledge-and-dog kind, when you can hear the crack of a whiplash half a mile away."

"You will hear that frequently enough if you follow Josephine," chuckled Adare. "Not a trail in these forests for a hundred miles she does not know. She trains all of the dogs, and they are wonderful."

It was on the point of Philip's tongue to ask a reason for the silence of the fierce pack he had seen the night before, when he caught himself. At the same moment the Indian woman appeared through the door with a laden tray. Adare helped her arrange their breakfast on a small table near the fire.

"I thought we would be more congenial here than alone in the dining-room, Philip," he explained. "Unless I am mistaken, the ladies won't be up until dinner time. Did you ever see a steak done to a finer turn than this? Marie, you are a treasure." He motioned Philip to a seat, and began serving. "Nothing in the world is better than a caribou porterhouse cut well back," he went on. "Don't fry or roast it, but broil it. An inch and a half is the proper thickness,



He took her face between his two hands and turned it up to him. Her fingers clasped his arms. But they made no effort to pull down the hands that held her eyes looking straight into his own.

just enough to hold the heart of it ripe with juice. See it ooze from that cut! Can you beat it?"

"Not with anything I have had along

the Arctic," confessed Philip. "A steak from the cheek of a cow walrus is about the best thing you find up in the 'Big Icebox'—that is, at first. Later, when

the aurora borealis has got into your marrow, you gorge on seal blubber and narwhal fat and call it good. As for me, I'd prefer pickles to anything else in the world, so with your permission I'll help myself. Just now I'd eat pickles with ice cream."

It was a pleasant meal. Philip could not remember when he had known a more agreeable host. Not until they had finished, and Adare had produced cigars of a curious length and slinness did the older man ask the question for which Philip had been carefully preparing himself.

"Now I want to hear about you," he said. "Josephine told me very little—said that she wanted me to get my impressions first hand. We'll smoke and talk. These cigars are clear Havanas. I have the tobacco imported by the bale and we make the cigars ourselves. Reduces the cost to a minimum, and we always have a supply. Go on, Philip. I'm listening."

Philip remembered Josephine's words telling him to narrate the events of his own life to her father—except that he was to leave open, as it were, the interval in which he was supposed to have known her in Montreal. It was not difficult for him to slip over this. He described his first coming into the North, and Adare's eyes glowed sympathetically when Philip quoted Hill's words down at Prince Albert and Jasper's up at Fond du Lac. He listened with tense interest to his experiences along the Arctic, his descriptions of the death of MacTavish and the passing of Pierre Radisson. But what struck deepest with him was Philip's physical and mental fight for new life, and the splendid way in which the wilderness had responded.

"And you couldn't go back now," he said, a tone of triumph in his voice. "When the forests once claim you—they hold."

"Not alone the forests, *mon père*."

"Ah, Mignonne. No, there is neither man nor beast in the world that would

leave her. Even the dogs are chained out in the deep spruce that they may not tear down our doors in the night to come near her. The whole world loves my Josephine. The Indians make the Big Medicine for her in a hundred tepees when they learn she is ill. They have trimmed five hundred lob-stick trees in her memory. *Mon Dieu*, in the Company's books there are written down more than thirty babes and children grown who bear her name of Josephine! She is different from her mother. Miriam has been always like a flower—a timid wood violet, loving this big world, yet playing no part in it away from my side. Sometimes Josephine frightens me. She will travel a hundred miles by sledge to nurse a sick child, and only last winter she buried herself in a shack filled with smallpox and brought six souls out of it alive! For two weeks she was buried in that hell. That is Mignonne, whom Indian, Breed and white man call *L'Ange*. Miriam they call *La Fleurette*. We are two fortunate men, my son!"

A dozen questions burned on Philip's lips, but he held them back, fearing that some accidental slip of the tongue might betray him. He was convinced that Josephine's father knew absolutely nothing of the trouble that was wrecking the happiness of Adare House, and he was equally positive that all, even Miriam herself, were fighting to keep the secret from him.

That Josephine's motherhood was not the sole cause of the mysterious and tragic undercurrent that he had been made to feel he more than suspected. A few hours would tell him if he was right, for he would ask Josephine to become his wife. And he already knew what John Adare did not know.

Miriam was not sick with a physical illness. The doctors whom Adare had not believed were right. And he wondered, as he sat facing her husband, if it was fear for his life that was breaking her down. Were they shielding him from some great and ever-menacing peril—a

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Monsieur Butterfly

By Frank R. Adams

Author of "An Engagement With Nancy Brown," etc.

DECORATIONS BY GRANT T. REYNARD

O reader most honorable, augustly deign to listen to this worthless tale of the Ugly American, of the Girl Back Home, of O Taku San, and of the Book of Lovers!

THE American Bar in Tokyo is haunted by homesick spirits. The very name of the place drags within its doors wanderers from every State, some of whom have never taken a drink before.

It isn't really very American when compared, for instance, with the buffet in the Knickerbocker Hotel at Forty-second and Broadway, or with Hannah & Hogg's on Randolph between State and Wabash. Still, in a city where the jinrikisha still fights with the tram-car (notice the nationality of the trolley line) for the supremacy of the streets, and half the buildings and two-thirds of the people look like the ornaments you hang on a Christmas tree,

it is a lure that home-hungry hearts find hard to resist. The faded but sturdy star-spangled banner that is draped over the door seems to promise in some way that inside you will find George Washington and Abraham Lincoln waiting to cheer up their wandering children.

After you get in you find it is more like a tea-house than a bar, but the magic still invests it with enough of the savor of home to make you tackle a mixed drink—and thereafter stick to something that comes out of one bottle.

It was there that Kingsbury ran across Steve Wing. Kingsbury's presence may be accounted for by mere passing curiosity, but Wing was there and had been there for days,





fighting off madness by promising his soul that sometime soon the swinging lattice doors would open to reveal the face and figure of some one he knew. Men get that way in the Orient.

The two men shook hands in the matter-of-fact, repressed fashion of the Anglo-Saxon male, and the familiar hailing sign of "What'll you have?" established them on opposite sides of a dinky table.

"I had heard that you left the States," Kingsbury was saying, "but I never dreamed of finding you in Japan. I thought you would be more apt to go to Paris."

"No. I had an opportunity to represent a Virginia tobacco company over here, and I took it," the other man explained briefly. "I wanted to get as far away from home as possible, and forget; and I guess I succeeded."

"At least you got a long ways from home," Kingsbury replied tactlessly.

"Yes, and I've forgotten, too," Wing assured him with too much bravado in his tone.

Kingsbury knew that Wing lied, but he had the sense to know also that the man was lying to himself as well, and forebore to doubt him even with his eyes.

Wing's story, as Kingsbury knew it,

was an ordinary unhappy romance. Steve had been the most ungainly, grotesque looking man in town. Arline de Garmau was unquestionably the prettiest girl. When they were seen together you noted her beauty with a gasp—it was so startling by contrast with the hopelessly heavy ugliness of her companion.

Unfortunately, Wing's un-ornamental exterior was furnished on the inside with an equipment much like that of any other man. Conscious of his unattractiveness, he had never associated much with girls; his shy heart had been starving for some one to love. When Arline noticed that he was occupying the same planet as

herself, he offered to her an untrained devotion that was pathetic.

For years, Arline had let herself be engaged to him. He was an obliging fiancé and never made any fuss when she went places with other men. He did not even prove troublesome when she decided suddenly, a week before the date set for their wedding, that she would prefer to marry Harry Lornegan, who happened to be visiting at Judge Chisholm's. Steve did not let on how much he was hurt. He even attended the wedding ceremony with a fixed smile that wrung the heart of every sentimental old woman in town.

After the wedding, though, he faded away abruptly and was known no more in the familiar haunts where he was beloved of men, if not of women. It was understood that he had gone to live abroad somewhere.

Kingsbury was the first man from "home" to run across Steve, and this was more than three years later.

"I've been very happy over here," Steve was saying as he sipped a highball slowly, wishing to continue the conversation as long as possible. "The work is not hard; the climate is pleasant; and I have a very charming wife."

"Wife!" echoed Kingsbury, nearly

jumping out of his chair. Then he laughed approvingly. "Good for you."

"She's Japanese, you know," Steve explained.

Kingsbury repressed his astonishment. "Oh," he murmured.

"Nearly all the Europeans and Americans here have Japanese wives," he went on. "It's the custom of the country, if you don't happen to know it."

"I think I have heard of it," the other recalled vaguely.

"It's a perfectly legitimate relation," Steve went on. "You are regularly married and everything, but the girl understands that when the man goes back to his own country, it's all off. It's very convenient."

"I should think so."

Kingsbury's approval was merely polite. Steve caught the false note at once.

"Of course you can't understand until you have lived in the country for a while and know the people. A girl in Japan has to bring to her husband a dowry of some sort. As you can readily see, that makes it very difficult for the daughter of a poor man to make a suitable match, no matter how nice she may be. In order to overcome that difficulty, very often her parents will arrange a marriage for her with some well-to-do American or European, with the definite understanding that he will divorce her later and give a certain amount agreed upon beforehand, which is to be her dowry for a subsequent native marriage. In that way, you see, a temporary marriage is a real benefit to the girl, because it assures her position in after life."

"But," objected Kingsbury, "in the case of *Madame Butterfly*—"

"All sentimental nonsense," interrupted the big man. "The author of that story deliberately overlooked the fact that these arrangements are purely business transactions, that the girl knows in advance that after a year or so she is to be at liberty to marry her native lover, whoever he may be. I imagine the girl in most cases looks forward eagerly to her release, instead of regarding it as anything about which to kill herself."

The talk turned to other matters, chiefly about people back home. Wing greedily absorbed stray bits of gossip

about even the merest acquaintances. Since he had left he had written no one; he had heard nothing that was not recorded in the newspapers. Kingsbury obligingly ransacked his memory for everything pertaining to their circle of friends. Only one subject he avoided: Arline. Wing asked no questions about her.

The afternoon waned.

"Come out to my home for tea," urged Wing. "Later, I'll take you to dinner at one of the hotels, but I ought to go home first, and I'd like to have you see what one of these native establishments is like."

Steve was so obviously eager to prolong his association with anyone from his home town that Kingsbury accepted the invitation. Besides, he was mildly curious about Steve's domestic affairs.

On the street, Steve stopped in front of an ornate shop where they sold toys and candies.

"Come in with me a minute," he invited, leading the way into the cluttered interior. "I must take home a present to O Taku San."

Kingsbury gazed with bewilderment at the marvelous toys that filled not only the counters but the air as well, because they were suspended everywhere on strings from the ceiling: highly colored kites in the forms of animals and fishes, dragons and snakes on springs, hideous and beautiful dolls, tiny paper umbrellas, curiously carved rattles, wonderful tops painted in gaudy colors, other sober ones armed with spears for fighting, and hundreds of tiny ornaments and wind bells of tinkling glass.

"O Taku San is your child?" suggested Kingsbury tentatively.

"Oh no," Steve laughed with a note of tenderness in his voice that made his companion look up at him sharply. "She is my wife. She seems more like a child than a woman, though, and she never outgrew her fondness for this sort of thing."

He gravely selected several of the articles on display, and purchased also a box of candy made in the shape of very indigestible looking dragons.

In front of the shop they hailed a couple of jinrikishas.

"It's an unsociable way to travel," said Wing, "but I live in the native quarter where the street cars don't run as yet."

THE journey took them across the Nihon-Bashi, or High Bridge of Japan, over the shining Sumida River and then on the other side through narrow native streets flanked with toy houses and gardens, across slender bamboo bridges spanning countless canals alive with market boats, and past ornate temples that looked very old and very tired.

Wing's house proved to be quite pretentious. It was carefully screened from the street by a bamboo hedge. The garden inside the hedge was of the conventional Japanese order—that is, it comprised every sort of landscape done in miniature. A six-foot mountain shadowed a crystal lake at its base; a sturdy stone bridge a foot wide arched across a narrow river; and gnarled and twisted dragon plum trees covered with pink and purple blossoms pretended that their dwarfed branches were towering among the clouds.

Gaily tinkling gate bells announced their arrival, and almost immediately the *shoji*, or paper covered lattice door, was pushed aside. A figure appeared in the entryway and started toward them, only to halt doubtfully at the sight of two men instead of one.

O Taku San was wearing, because that color pleased her august husband most, a sky blue kimono tied high under her arms with a broad scarlet obi that matched a geranium tucked in her hair.

"Come, O Taku San," commanded Steve kindly, "and greet thy husband's friend, Mr. Kingsbury."

O Taku San advanced gravely and made a deep obeisance thrice, with the backs of her tiny hands held up.

"The honorable Kingsbury is most welcome."

She dwelt lovingly on the letter "s" with the faintest suspicion of a hiss, and absolutely ignored her "t's" when they came at the end of a word.

Her speech ended, she shyly retreated to Steve's side and held onto one of his fingers while she cautiously inspected their guest.

Kingsbury noted that beside his friend the Japanese woman seemed a mere child. She could not have been more than four feet, six inches, in height, and her tiny, delicate feet looked like jokes by comparison with the substantial underpinning of a full grown man. Her face was small, too, and by reason of her highly arched eye-brows wore a continual look of amused surprise.

"What have you done with your important self this day?" queried Wing, pinching her cheek playfully.

"I have scolded thy maid-servant severely because she broke thy honorable fountain pen."

"Hm!" Wing held her off at arm's length and searched her face judiciously. "Was it my very best fountain pen?"

"Yes, best beloved husband, it was," she replied; then she added eagerly, "For that reason I scolded her so severely."

"I see. I did not know that our maid-servant, Rose of the Moon, knew how to write. How did she come to break it?"

"I was writing with the pen myself in the Book of Lovers, and she kept interrupting me until she made me so angry I had to throw it at her."

Wing started to frown but Kingsbury laughed and the other had to join him.

"What else have you accomplished, O Taku San, in the long hours I have been away from thee?"

"I fed the carp and read a book which bored me much, and then I made thee, oh blind and ungrateful husband, this adorable, scrumptious dress for me."

She eluded his grasp and turned to display her kimono from all sides.

"Will it please the honorable Kingsbury to enter our poor dwelling?" she continued when she had received sufficient masculine approval.

Inside the house of his friend, Kingsbury found a few concessions to Western taste and comfort. Substantial chairs testified to Wing's inability to sit cross-legged on the floor in native style, and several ornaments on the walls and table attracted Kingsbury's attention as being of American origin. One was a photograph in a silver frame, which the visitor picked up from the table to examine more closely.

"Why, it's Arline!" he exclaimed.

"Yes." The assent came from an unexpected quarter. O Taku San was regarding him soberly as she spoke. "Tha's my husband's sister. She is very beautiful. He loves her very much, my husband."

Kingsbury looked across to Wing, who pleaded dumbly that his secret be kept.

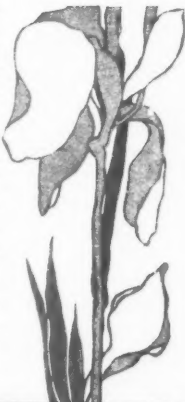
"I have brought most surprising presents, O Taku San," the big man said by way of diversion, indicating the packages from the toy shop.

She sat on the floor and undid the parcels with childish delight while Steve showed his guest through the other rooms of the house.

"You see what an ideal arrangement it is," he offered when they were alone. "She really is quite fond of me and I'm quite fond of her, but it can all be broken off like that." He snapped his fingers. "The Japanese are born and bred stoics. They have repressed their emotions so long that at last they feel very little. At first I thought their gaiety was cruel and heartless, but I am beginning to learn the scheme of life that

is back of it all."

Rose of the Moon notified them that tea was served, and Wing led the way out into the garden. On the turf beside the miniature lake knelt O Taku San, casting handfuls of white pellets into the water. The little white balls floated for an instant or so and then each one opened like a popping kernel of



corn, and out sprang two or three cherry blossoms that drifted in graceful flotillas across the pond at the will of the spring breeze.

The tiny young matron was so absorbed that she did not notice the approach of the men.

"For the sake of the gold fish," said Wing with a sigh, "I hope that the red





coloring matter in those paper cherry blossoms is not poisonous.

"These are a very nice present, my husband," said O Taku San, gazing regretfully after the floating flowers as she rose gracefully to her

feet. "I thank you so much. Also for the nice sugar dragons. I bit the tail off of each one."

Taking tea in a Japanese garden reminded Kingsbury of nothing so much as when as a youngster he had played "keep house" with the girl next door and they had consumed an imaginary meal served on doll dishes.

O Taku San poured the tea herself in thimble size cups, and passed rice cakes of surprising thinness and crispness.

The two men sat on a stone bench but the girl occupied a piece of matting on the grass at the feet of her lord and master. Before they sat down, the girl had retrieved a book which had been lying on the bench.

"That is a very beautiful book you have," said Kingsbury by way of making conversation with his hostess. "May I see it?"

O Taku San looked swiftly at Wing.

"You may let him see it," he permitted.

It was a square-shaped volume bound in soft blue leather with a golden dragon on it.

"It is the Book of Lovers," O Taku San said simply. "Whenever we think beautiful thoughts about each other we write them there and then if ever we forget and are angry we read it over to remind us how much we really care."

Kingsbury returned the book gracefully. "As yet I will allow myself to look only upon the outside."

Wing drew an audible breath of relief.

"O Taku San, you may read what you have written there today," he commanded as a concession, "—the thoughts you had before Rose of the Moon so carelessly made you destroy your pen."

O Taku San opened the limp volume flat on her knee. The

cream-white pages were covered with a writing done in a large, bold hand with a fine disregard for the price of black ink.

"To-day I wrote this," she said by way of prologue, puckering her forehead over the chirography. "Oh, my husband, if I should die and go to heaven, I hope that God will look like thee. Then I shall be happy there."

Kingsbury was impelled to laugh and then thought better of it.

"She thinks I am good looking," his friend explained in an undertone. "Don't tell her that nobody in the world agrees with her."

"Then I wrote this," O Taku San went on earnestly; "Life is here to-day with thee; death is to-morrow if thou art gone."

When they parted at length that night, Wing assured his friend that he had saved his reason. "A touch of companionship once in a while makes a lot of difference. A man who is away from the places and people that he cares for gets to thinking a lot of things that aren't so."

"Then why not go back home?" suggested Kingsbury.

"I did think of it when the strain was extra bad, but now that I've seen you I think I can stand it for another year or so."

THE next day Kingsbury sailed for Yokohama.

When he reached home he spoke casually of having met Steve Wing in Tokyo, but, because he knew people would not understand, he made no mention of O Taku San.

Owing to that reticence, the post office department in the Japanese capital was put to some inconvenience to deliver an ivory-shaded envelope addressed simply to "Mr. Stephen Wing, Tokyo, Japan."



The letter eventually reached the office of the great tobacco company where the big man spent his days industriously representing American Commerce. It sprang out at him from a mass of correspondence.

on the thin rice paper affected by the Japanese business houses.

His heart seemed to stop beating while he held it in his hand. The wall of the office faded away and he saw before him the sender of the letter. She was tall, blonde, with the breathless beauty of a goddess. Dressed in white, as he had last seen her, the serene coolness of her was like a drink from a crystal spring. He had thought he was forgetting, and here the sight of her handwriting had conjured up an image as clear as if she stood before him.

After a while he read the note. It began without any formal address.

It seems long since I have had word of you. Now that, indirectly, I have learned where you are, something forces me to write. Since you left I have grown somewhat older, and I know perhaps a little better how selfish and heedless I always was in my treatment of you. Until you were gone out of my life I did not realize what you had meant to me. This note is a poor way of saying that I am sorry. Wont you, sometime, make it possible for me to tell you face to face how much you have been missed by—

ARLINE.
P. S.—Mother and I are living alone together at the old place. You have doubtless heard of our recent bereavements.

She wanted to see him. Well, lots of people want to see their friends. What of it? But this was different. She was a widow now. She knew that he had tried to forget, and if she wanted him back it could mean but one thing. He told his heart that he was deceiving himself, but his heart pleaded back to keep on doing it because it was such glorious sport.

"I wont pay any attention to it," Steve decided hesitatingly.

"Let's go and see," insisted the heart. "What if it were so, and you missed it because you were afraid to find out?"

"It would be nice just to visit back home anyway," Steve admitted.

"We could meet her accidentally," supplemented his heart.

"I'm entitled to a vacation. The export sales manager wrote that last week."

"Then we'll go!" the heart decided in brisk, business-like fashion and began

jumping around in joyous anticipation.

"But O Taku San," objected Steve tardily.

"Don't bother about her," said his heart impatiently. "That is a mere business transaction. I have nothing to do with it." Then it added in a moment: "At least I don't think I have."

"But I wont go away and leave her waiting for me to come back. It wouldn't be fair to her or to Arline."

"Then give her a thousand dollars for her dowry and send her back to her parents. With that much money, she will be one of the most popular grass widows in the empire. You'll be doing her a kindness."

"I suppose so," assented Steve, who wanted to think that way anyhow.

SO he decided to wind up his affairs; and that very day he sent a letter to O Taku San's honorable father, who was a poor but capable carpenter, telling him to look after the welfare of his daughter, and enclosed an order for a thousand golden yen to provide for her future. He further presented her with the house in which they had lived and delicately suggested that he would not see her again but would leave all the details to her father. It seemed less brutal that way.

O Taku San disposed of thus conveniently, Wing began making preparations for departure.

He procured a ticket on the mail boat leaving in five days, and telegraphed his home office for permission to turn the agency over to a subordinate. Then he visited a European tailor and negotiated for several suits of clothes to be rushed to completion before his departure. All his old belongings he decided to leave behind, and so purchased a fresh stock of haberdashery, toilet articles, trunks, grips and everything necessary for the long ocean voyage, all of which he installed in a room at one of the tourist hotels, where he had decided to live in order to get used to American ways.

The excitement of getting ready and the prospect of going home filled his days with joyous activity. There had been no word from O Taku San, no farewell. He was rather glad of that. It was the sensible way to finish it. Occasionally

he thought of her irrepressible gaiety and her continual look of pleased surprise, but much oftener he thought of the ivory colored note in his pocket.

He stopped in at the office the afternoon of the day before his boat sailed, to say good-by to his assistant. He intended to take the train to Yokohama that evening.

"There's a letter of yours that came back undelivered," the office man told him as he was leaving.

"All right, let's have it," Wing surmised it was a bill directed to some up-country firm whose address he had quoted wrongly to his stenographer.

The man handed him the envelope. It was the one he had addressed to O Taku San's father. It had not been opened.

"Can I attend to that for you?" the young assistant asked pleasantly, holding out his hand for the letter.

"No," Wing roused himself from the brown study into which he had fallen. "No, I must attend to this myself."

He stumbled dazedly to the streets and took a jinrikisha to the address on the envelope, determined to deliver the letter in person to his wife's father.

The house was vacant.

He inquired of the neighbors. They told him that the carpenter and his wife had died very recently and had left no one except a daughter whose address they did not know.

There was only one thing to do. He himself would have to make arrangements with O Taku San. He could go out to the house and take a train for Yokohama at midnight.

A spring mist was rising from the

river and hastening the dusk. The yellow lanterns of jinrikishas flashed to life here and there and swung glowingly off on their way. Runners called out to each other in the dark, and the patter of feet gave warning of homeward hastening conveyances.

Through it all, scarce noticing, rode Wing, facing uneasily in his mind the coming interview. Poor O Taku San! Having no family made her lot a lonely one. Still, she would not be alone long—not with a fortune of a thousand dollars, he assured himself.

The *shoji* of his house stood open and a square of yellow light came from it. This was unusual. It was quite chilly and the entrance should have been closed.

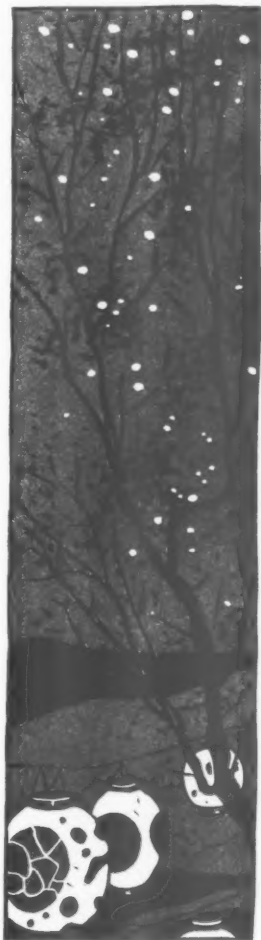
As he crossed the garden, the harsh tones of a gong being sharply beaten struck his ears.

At the dooryard he paused.

Within, not noticing him, were O Taku San and Rose of the Moon. O Taku San sat stiffly on a cushion and Rose of the Moon stood in the center of the room, evidently engaged in some operation requiring great care. Beside her stood a brazier with an open fire in it. From time to time she tore a leaf out of a book and dropped it on the glowing coals. Then as it flamed up she would beat hastily on a gong.

Rose of the Moon delayed long enough to examine the blue-bound book which she held in her hand.

"There is only one page left, O Taku San," she informed her mistress. "All of the other pages have now been consumed."





O Taku San swayed slightly, then caught herself.

"Then go and see if thy master is not come," she directed. "Surely the gods have heard my prayer and have returned him safe to me."

Rose of the Moon met the master of the house as he stepped across the threshold. With a scream she turned and fled, dropping the "Book of Lovers" as she ran.

O Taku San turned her face that wore a look of perpetual pleasant surprise toward her lord and master.

"I knew that you would come, O august husband," she said, her eyes, great glowing coals in her colorless cheeks. "I sacrificed the thing I loved most of all and the gods have answered."

She rose to her feet and started toward him, but half way, staggered and would have fallen if he had not jumped to her side and caught her in his arms.

She was unconscious a long time, while he held her, a mere featherweight, close to his heart. Then finally her breathing became easier and she fell into a deep sleep.

At length he placed her tenderly on a cushioned mat that took the place of a couch, and made her comfortable with pillows and a silken coverlet.

Then he mechanically picked up the

"Book of Lovers" from where Rose of the Moon had dropped it. Nothing was left of it but the outside cover and a single page covered with writing in O Taku San's well-known hand.

He looked at it more closely. It was something new. He had never read it before.

I shall not sleep, until thy return, for fear lest death might discover me when my hand is not in thine, and I know that without thee to lead me I could never find the way.

That explained why she had fainted in his arms. Four days she had been without sleep, and now, secure in his presence, she had fallen into a slumber that resembled death.

A long time he pondered her childlike features, and the tiny, thin hand that roamed restlessly over the coverlet. His gaze was that of a physician framing a difficult diagnosis.

Then he went to the brazier and placed on the coals a piece of ivory colored paper which blazed bravely for a moment and was gone.

Once more he went to the couch of O Taku San and sat down beside it. The tiny hand that strayed uneasily across the coverlet came to rest in his palm and his fingers closed over it. It was thus that the sun found them at daybreak.

The Hare of March

By Justin Huntly McCarthy

Author of "If I Were King," etc

"THE Hare of March" is the initial story in the series this noted English dramatist is writing for us: a gem of a short story with the grip of a powerful play. ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. GRUGER

THE plan of campaign of the Cupola Theatre of Varieties, with regard to its productions, was always the same: it might be described as a policy of monotonous audacity. The Cupola, in the person of its acute and astute manager, did not ransack the four corners of the world for novelties. It—and he—left those ardors and energies to others, but it did not deny itself the privilege of benefiting by them, and of going one better in the process. Did a rival establishment import a new school of dancing, a new scheme of coloring, a new way of staging some ancient tale, the Cupola followed suit promptly and cheerfully with the sincerest flattery, and the most daring exaggeration. It out-jiggled Nijinski; it out-blazed Bakst, until the Russian seemed no more than a timid beginner in black and white; it made its staircase-scene a moving staircase that never stopped, and it mixed up its performers and its audience as if the two were the ingredients of a living cocktail. It was a safe policy and it paid well.

Faithful to this policy, the Cupola—as represented by Mr. Dunstan Mudge—was producing with delirious success its second "Revue," "Trot Along, Turkey," with all and more than all the elements that the public had learned to expect in this form of entertainment. It had its American comedians, who carried the atmosphere of the Tenderloin over the footlights and made an Atlantic voyage a superfluity; it had costumes of the most weird and fearful form and color; it gloried in purple wigs and gilded faces, and it had a beauty chorus which my Lord Strathmiglo, who as a director was inclined to be critical, admitted to be top-hole.

The house was packed daily; every seat from the cheapest to the dearest was occupied and could have been occupied again if those that sat in them had consented to take other tenants on their laps. There were "queues" trailing from the doors of pit and gallery, of a length and thickness that made Mr. Mudge smile as he had never been wont to smile before, though he always carried a good-

humored countenance. The Cupola had never had such audiences, had never known such enthusiasm; and in the epoch-making moment when the dancing girls invaded the auditorium and tossed what seemed to be love-letters to members of the audience picked at hazard, the spectators reeled and shrieked in a delirium of delight.

YET even as, according to a great poet temporarily disdainful of grammar, there is in the lowest depth a lower deep, so in the highest enthusiasm of the Cupola audiences as a whole, there came in time to be discernible a still higher enthusiasm, single-hearted and single-voiced, that on certain occasions out-applauded, or at least over-applauded, all the rest.

People who went frequently to the Cupola Theatre—for there was a Cupola habit which was very catching—began to notice, and the employees of the theatre began to notice, that on every Wednesday and Saturday *matinée*, the applause from a certain corner of the gallery was at certain moments always emphasized by an individual approval that was invariably of the same stentorian character. Involved at first in the general applause which a happy audience lavishly accorded to every scene and every player in "Trot Along, Turkey," this especial demonstration of approval lingered on the crest of the wave of sound and took fresh force and volume. Then could the voice—a man's voice—he heard thunderously demanding an encore of any number in which the chorus as well as a principal figured, and cries of "Bravo" came from the same corner and the same voice long after the rest of the audience had settled down to the next item. It was a voice which knew how to use itself and how to husband its powers to obtain the best result, and it rang through the theatre like a trumpet call.

Naturally, nothing of the kind could occur at the Cupola thus time after time with such emphatic regularity, without coming to the knowledge of the management. Mr. Mudge soon heard of the impassioned applauder, and then heard him for himself and smiled and frowned as

he caught those frantic bravoes volleyed with such an accent of command. Mr. Mudge smiled because he liked enthusiasm generally and because he particularly liked enthusiasm addressed to the performances at the Cupola Theatre. Mr. Mudge frowned because he felt inclined to be annoyed at the assertive display of rapture. He feared that some rival, of the Cupola's many rivals, might hear of it and launch against the Cupola the accusation of employing a "claque." But in the face of the ceaseless persistence with which "Trot Along, Turkey," continued to run and to draw, Mr. Mudge was able to discard this apprehension and to smile again at the loud-voiced enthusiast who seemed so heartily to admire all the scenes in which the chorus played a part.

ONE afternoon, even, Mr. Mudge, moved by a not unnatural curiosity, climbed the heights to the Cupola gallery and had a look at his demonstrative patron. He could easily have found him for himself without the help of an attendant eager to be of service to the great manager. Mr. Mudge saw in the corner a tall, elderly man of a military carriage and with a spruce exterior. He had a lean, long face of a rusty red complexion which his excitement deepened on his high-boned cheeks to a hectic glow. His thin gray hair was carefully brushed to make the most of it, and his iron-gray mustache was twisted with a Prussian fierceness. Mr. Mudge, who was by temperament and by training an observant man, noted that the man's linen was spotless and that his trousers boasted an accurate crease. Carrying his observation a little farther, Mr. Mudge noticed that his coat was very shiny at the seams, and deduced, quite rightly, that his boots were well polished and had been patched.

"Comes here every *matinée*," said the attendant in a deferential whisper, "and always gets the same seat, and always goes on like that."

"Do you know who he is?" Mr. Mudge asked. The attendant shook his head regretfully, for he would have been glad to oblige Mr. Mudge. "No, sir," he said, "but we call him the Major. He's quite the gentleman."



"Do you know who he is?" Mr. Mudge asked. The attendant shook his head regretfully.

Mr. Mudge nodded agreement with this judgment, went his way and very presently forgot all about the gallery-man with the well-worn clothes, the military manner, and above all, the military voice that hurtled its bravos through the air as if they were so many orders dominating a cavalry charge. He was a not uninteresting figure, even an interesting figure, affording occasion for a little brief wonder as to the reason for his frequent visits. But Mr. Mudge had many things to think about, and the Major faded from his mind.

It was not only in the front of the house that the quaint figure of the Major was a familiar sight and a cause of interest. On the first night of "Trot Along, Turkey," he made his appearance at the stage door of the Cupola. Naturally, he was not alone there. At the stage door of the Cupola was habitually "some crowd" at the end of each show, and beautiful young gentlemen in beautiful apparel thronged the pavement, looking like glorious ghosts of pleasure in the dim light. The tall, thin, elderly man in the shabby-genteel garments received many a stare, half contemptuous, half pitying, and wholly astonished, from these young bloods, but the Major seemed to heed them as little as if they were indeed no more than the phantoms they suggested. He walked briskly up and down, smoking a long, lean, wickedly black cigar, or he leaned against a wall with that red point of light glowing like a danger-signal through the darkness. If he were aware that his presence there was the cause of comment to the golden lads—and indeed he could scarcely fail to be aware of it—he showed no sign of self-consciousness or unease. There he walked and there he stood, while the long, black, evil weed slowly dwindled. Nobody noticed him attentively enough, though everyone that waited there noticed him a little, to discover that his calm demeanor was oddly in contrast with the excitement that blazed in his eyes and flamed in crimson patches on his lantern jaws.

ONE by one, lovely ladies floated forth from the gaunt portals, each to be received with rapture by her own par-

ticular specter, and so to vanish into the night, into a night of smiles and wine. In a little while, all the gracious phantoms were gone, and still the Major lingered there. Finally, after a long interval, a woman came out of the door heavily veiled, and paused for a moment. The Major gallantly cast away the stump of his cigar, gallantly raised his ancient hat; the woman slipped her arm in his and they went off together.

The custom thus begun continued. There he would be, faithful as to time and hour, every evening without fail. As he had grown familiar in the front of the house to audience and attendants, so he had grown familiar in this blank back of the house to those who nightly waited there, to the goddesses they waited for, to the comedians, to the stage hands. His nickname of "the Major" floated round from the front of the house to the stage-door, and clung to him there. After a while, he earned the squatter's right of all habitual visitors and was regarded with curiosity no more. Early speculations as to why he came there so patiently and persistently, languished out of existence. Only his absence from his nightly post could have revived an interest in him. But he never was absent from his nightly post—though he never made his appearance at the stage door of the Cupola after the matinees.

The stage-door-keeper of the Cupola had noticed the Major, like everybody else, but he noticed him without surprise. It is not given to any man to surprise the stage-door-keeper of a Cupola Theatre. When the weather was fine, the stage-door-keeper had a taste for taking the air with a pipe when the rush of loveliness had ebbed and the worshipers had evaporated. There, propped against the lintel and peacefully smoking, he had first become aware of the Major waiting there alone, and had wondered whom he was waiting for, and had wondered who the veiled lady might be with whom he finally departed. When in the course of time he grew familiar with the fact of that lonely presence outlasting the revelers, he unbent sufficiently from his sense of dignity to pass the weather-words to him. The Major had responded briskly that it was indeed as he had said

a very fine night, and therewith a kind of friendship was inaugurated between the pair.

WHATEVER sense of patronage might be implied in such an acquaintance was obviously on the side of the door-keeper, who very speedily discovered that the Major belonged to a class of humanity unfamiliar at the stage-door of the Cupola, from whom no tip was ever likely to come. But the door-keeper had been a soldier in his youth and had been wounded by a Boer bullet, and he perceived, more clearly than others might, the soldierly quality in the elderly man who smoked those long, hot, venomous black cigars. So the door-keeper dismissed all thought of patronizing the shabby-genteel stranger, and thereafter saluted him on sight.

"Begging your pardon, sir," he said one evening nigh on the hour of midnight, "but you have been in the army, haven't you?" The man that was known as the Major at the Cupola nodded sharply, and answered briefly, "Yes."

"I heard one of our people speak of you as 'the Major'—" the door-keeper went on. The shabby-genteel man interrupted him.

"Did you know?" he said with an air of interest. "I wonder how he got to know. As a matter of fact, I have the honor of holding that rank in his Majesty's army—Major Parloe, Retired."

It would be hard to exaggerate the sound of pride in his voice as he announced his rank, or the note of sorrow into which that pride declined as he added the word "Retired." He stood for a moment in an attitude and a silence so woe-begone that the door-keeper yearned to be privileged to offer him three of Scotch; but after that moment he brightened again and began to chat quite briskly and affably.

"I dare say you wonder, now," the Major went on, "why I come here night after night, and wait for a certain lady." He eyed the door-keeper, as he spoke, with a perfectly amiable countenance that accorded ill with the restless glitter in his eyes and the hot color on his worn cheeks. "I dare say you wonder," he repeated.

Any element of wonder that had ever been in the door-keeper's composition—and it was precious little at any time—had long been pinched and squeezed and pressed and hammered out of it by the swinging door at which he served. But he did not say as much to Major Parloe; he only nodded acquiescence.

"You mustn't think I am like one of these lads," said the Major sagaciously. Indeed, nothing less like one of these lads than the lean, shabby-genteel personality of Major Parloe could possibly have presented itself to the gaze of the door-keeper. "No, no, no, nothing of the sort. The lady whose nightly escort I am privileged to be is no other than my wife." He surveyed the door-keeper with a kindly smile. "Her name in the profession," he continued, evidently proud of saying the words "the profession" with such easy glibness, "is Miss Deloraine."

THE MAJOR evidently expected that the door-keeper would be impressed by this announcement, and the door-keeper was so evidently unimpressed that Major Parloe looked considerably dashed. Whereupon, to reassure him, the door-keeper nodded his head and murmured, "Miss Deloraine—to be sure, to be sure!"

He had a vague idea that there was a young lady named Deloraine in the Cupola's enormous chorus. It was the kind of name that flourished in that chorus. But he could not place her personality, and he reflected that she could not be a very important chorus girl, for he was very certain that no letters came for Miss Deloraine, no telegrams, no flowers, no boxes of sweets, no cosy little packages with the names of jewelers upon them. Miss Deloraine was evidently a person of no account.

Thereafter, for many an evening, the Major talked freely with the door-keeper, and, to tell the truth, began to bore him extremely by the accounts he gave of the beauty and transcendent talents of his wife, Miss Deloraine. But if Miss Deloraine had beauty and talents, she also had injuries and wrongs. If she were given her proper chance, the Major asserted hotly, she would soon oust the present

public favorites from their undeserved position. It was lack of opportunity, lack of interest alone, that kept her in the chorus. Certain people, the Major would observe darkly, were opposed to giving her that chance: they preferred that she should be kept in the background. It was safer for themselves and their pets.

At these times, the Major would break through his trained reserve of bearing and flourish his arms a bit wildly, and the unquiet gleam in his eye would intensify, and all the time the door-keeper would be wondering which of all the hundreds of girls at the Cupola Miss Deloraine might be. For when Miss Deloraine came out to join her Major, she was always closely veiled, and for a long time the door-keeper got no further than hearing her greet her husband in a very sweet and refined voice, and in the most cheerful of words.

ONE night, however, when the door-keeper was at his post as usual, and when Major Parloe was at his post as usual, Miss Deloraine, appearing last as usual, was seen by the door-keeper for the first time, to his knowledge. She had discarded her veil, perhaps because of the warmth of the weather, and the man's surprised eyes saw a small, pinched face, lined and wistful and sad, and with no claims whatever to youth. The woman had undoubtedly been pretty once, but trouble, toil and time had passed their blighting hands over her face and had left her nothing but the beautiful expression of her good eyes. She tucked her arm into the Major's, looked affectionately up at him, and they went off together. The Major walked with as proud a step and as happy a mien as if the most famous queen of song or dance in the world were hanging on his arm.

The stage-door-keeper was not a man to be impressed profoundly by a beautiful expression in a pair of good eyes set in a wizened face. He doubled himself up in silent laughter.

"Why, the Major's off his chump," he murmured through his mirth. "Mad as a March 'are. Oh, Lord!"

But because he regarded the Major as his superior officer, and because he felt sorry for him, he, the door-keeper, after

that amazing, pathetic glimpse of the wizened face, listened more attentively to the poor Major's ravings. When the Major was not praising the physical beauty and the histrionic qualifications of Miss Deloraine, he would occasionally let fall little bits of information about their life in common.

"She has kept the home together for years by her transcendent talents, sir," he said one evening, with tremendous gravity. "I myself, though I have had the honor to serve my Queen and my King, have been unlucky. At my best I was not worthy to tie her shoe-string, and now at my worst—" He made a pathetic gesture of apology, and continued:

"That she, a beautiful woman of genius, should have stuck to me all this time when she might have had the pick of all the men in England—" The Major flourished his arms largely as if nothing but a gesture of magnitude were sufficient to illustrate the situation.

After a time, the door-keeper began to notice that the Major was developing a certain irritability of manner, which found vent in vehement speech. He was surprised, he said, astounded, in fact, and also disgusted, to find that Miss Deloraine had not been promoted to one of the principal parts by now. It was simply scandalous that such talent should be kept hidden by low jealousy. The lamentable fact was that notoriety, not genius or beauty, was the way to fame on the boards nowadays.

"Let a woman get into the papers on any account," said the Major bitterly, "let her do a murder, or commit arson or have a dozen husbands at a time, and she becomes a success immediately. Notoriety, sir—that is the stepping stone to fame."

THAT evening the Major was very excited, and his wife, looking more tired and sad than usual, had some ado to get him away quietly. The door-keeper, who had made inquiries and who knew that Miss Deloraine was only engaged because in spite of her age and plainness her voice still had its value in the background, looked after them and shook his head.



J.R.G. R.

From a corner in the dress circle came a puff of smoke. This, clearing away, disclosed a man standing up with a revolver in his extended hand. The man was smiling happily.

Thereafter the Major's conversation with the door-keeper took on a more mysterious tinge. He seemed unnaturally gay, and had a sly air about him as of one who could disclose a secret worth hearing if he chose, but who did not choose.

"You will see," he said to his friend, "you will see. To-morrow, the name of Miss Deloraine will no longer be unknown. She will be famous; she will be sought after; she will be, in a word, successful. And if ever a woman deserved success, she does. The best of women, the most charming, the sweetest of wives to a broken-down old crock like me."

The next day was Saturday. At the matinee, the Major was for once not in his usual place in the gallery. He occupied a corresponding place in the dress-circle, and his voice rang out from the new coign with its old enthusiastic "encores" and "bravos" when the chorus—among whom Miss Deloraine figured at the end and back of a row—adorned the stage. The bevy of women was tripping off the stage, and for the moment Miss Deloraine as the last of a line was almost alone on the stage, before her colleagues had quite disappeared.

At that moment there resounded through the house an explosion like the bursting of a motor tire. From a corner in the dress-circle came a puff of smoke. This, clearing away, disclosed a man standing up with a revolver in his extended hand. The man was smiling happily.

The last woman in the back row of the chorus staggered; a hand was put out to support her, and she was drawn hastily into the wings. Then the curtain fell and the house was in a tumult.

THE Major offered no resistance to capture. He went quietly out between two commissionaires, and talked volubly to them all the way. Another man dashed hurriedly in search of Mr. Mudge. The rest of the attendants had

their work to do in keeping the audience calm. In the hall, Mr. Mudge and a policeman appeared simultaneously, and the policeman took the Major in charge. The Major ignored Mr. Mudge, but he appeared to welcome the policeman.

"Yes," he said proudly, "I shot her. I am Major Parloe. She is my wife, Miss Deloraine. I am and always have been all my life a dead shot, and I have wounded her slightly in the right shoulder."

At this moment the stage-door-keeper made his appearance. He had heard the news, and discarding duty, had rushed round to the front. The Major greeted him with enthusiasm.

"There," he said with tears of pride and joy in his eyes, "what did I tell you, sir? Notoriety is all Miss Deloraine needed to make her famous. Her husband has given her the chance."

He was so obviously insane and at the same time now so obviously harmless—he had yielded up his weapon most peaceably—that those in charge of him permitted him to beckon the stage-door-keeper and to whisper in his ear:

"All the public will know," he said, "is that Miss Deloraine, a beautiful actress, was shot and wounded by her husband. The situation has an element of romance, has it not? No one need know why I really did it, and I don't mind what the penalty is, as far as I am concerned. All I care for is that she will have her chance. To-morrow the name of Miss Deloraine will be famous throughout England—and then—ah!"

He laughed as he spoke, and then suffered himself to be led away, completely happy.

All he had said was no doubt true, and Miss Deloraine's name was, as her husband prophesied, famous for a day or two throughout England. But for once Major Parloe's dead-shot aim had not gone true—and she herself was lying quietly with a bullet through her heart, and for the first time in twenty years her face did not look tired.

In the October Red Book will come "*April's Lady*," a delightful love story, the second of Mr. McCarthy's Red Book series.

The Eagle's Claws

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN



HERE we have a new story of that intrepid detective, Philo Gubb, graduate (in twelve complete lessons) of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting.

AS Philo Gubb boarded the train for Riverbank, at Bardville, Iowa, after having recovered a silver loving cup from the interior of a petrified man, he cast a regretful glance backward toward where the dome of the "big top" glowed opalescently. He left with reluctance the scene of his most recent triumph in detecting, for he had enjoyed his short stay among the people of the Side-show, and only the desire to hurry the silver golf trophy home to Mr. Jonas Medderbrook hastened his departure. His elation was therefore tinged with sorrow. He would have liked to stay longer among the interesting Side-show gentlemen and ladies.

As one of the most promising graduates of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, Mr. Gubb had made a number of notable successes. It was true that since he had taken up the career of a detective he had never suc-

ceeded in solving a mystery he had undertaken or in capturing a malefactor he had sought, but as he invariably solved something else or caught some other malefactor, he was well satisfied. If he could have afforded it, he would have given up his side-line of paper-hanging and general interior decorating, entirely; but detective cases were few in Riverbank; and although Mr. Gubb suffered from dyspepsia and ate but little, even that little cost money, and months sometimes elapsed between calls for his professional services. Luckily, he was a bachelor and he had never thought of love, with its possible happy culmination in the form of a wife to feed—never, that is, until he visited the Side-show of the World's Greatest Combined Shows. There he saw Syrilla.

It was with Syrilla in mind that Detective Gubb looked back as he boarded the train. He had come to Bardville seeking a vanished field-secretary of the

Riverbank Ladies' Social Reform Society, and he had discovered, instead, the silver golf cup stolen from Mr. Jonas Medderbrook; but he had also discovered among the human curiosities of the Side-show the first woman to make his heart beat more rapidly. He admired Mr. Lonergan, the living skeleton; Mr. Hoxie, the strong man; Mr. Enderbury, the tattooed man; Princess Zozo, the serpent trainer; the Circassian Girl; General Thumb, the dwarf; Major Ching, the giant; and all the rest. But the moment his eyes alighted on Syrilla he was lost in sweet admiration. There was almost a ton of her pinky-white beauty, and her placid, cow-like expression struck a pleasant chord in Philo Gubb's heart.

Philo knew, however, that his admiration must be hopeless, for there could be no doubt that a beauty like Syrilla must earn a salary in keeping with her size, and Philo Gubb's income was apt to be too irregular and small to keep even a thin wife. Philo Gubb would have been quite satisfied to admire Syrilla without thought of ever winning her love, but he knew that the World's Greatest Combined Shows would move further and further from Bardville, while his duty demanded that he go in the opposite direction as far as Riverbank, that he might return the silver loving cup to Jonas Medderbrook and receive the offered reward of five hundred dollars.

FIVE hundred dollars was a large reward for a loving cup that cost not over thirty dollars, it is true, but Mr. Jonas Medderbrook could afford to pay what he chose, and as he was passionately fond of golf and passionately poor at the game, and as this was probably the only golf prize he would ever win, he was justified in paying liberally. As the train passed out of sight of the circus grounds at Bardville, Detective Gubb sighed, put Syrilla out of his mind, and looked at the cup. It was a smooth cup with two handles. When he won it, Mr. Medderbrook had selected it himself. He had chosen the most cup he could get for the money. If Philo Gubb admired Syrilla because she was the Fat Lady of the Side-show, Mr. Medderbrook loved

this cup because it was not merely a tankard but almost large enough to be called a tank.

Detective Gubb hurried from the train when it stopped at Riverbank, and hastened to the home of Mr. Medderbrook, but when he pushed the button alongside the door of that large and palatial house, the door opened to show the colored butler, who told Mr. Gubb that Mr. Medderbrook was at the Golf Club, attending the annual banquet of the Fifty Worst Duffers. Mr. Gubb shifted the golf cup under his other arm and started for the Golf Club. As he walked, with his flamingo-like nose pointing the way and his flamingo-like eyes turning from side to side only as his head turned, he thought of Syrilla, and he was at the gate of the Golf Club before he knew it.

He walked up the path toward the club-house, but when halfway, he stopped short, all his detective instincts aroused in an instant. The windows of the club-house glowed with light, and sounds of merriment issued from them, but the cause of Philo Gubb's sudden pause was a head. The head was that of a man, and it was silhouetted against one of the glowing windows. The eyes belonging to the head were evidently peering in at the window, and as Mr. Gubb watched, he saw the head disappear in the gloom below the window only to reappear at another window. Mr. Gubb, following the directions as laid down in Lesson Eight of the Correspondence Lessons, dropped to his hands and knees and crept silently toward the *Paul Pry*. By keeping to the grass at the side of the drive, Mr. Gubb was able to come quite near the interloper unobserved. When within a few feet of him, Mr. Gubb seated himself tailor-fashion on the grass and waited. He wished to think. There was nothing in the Correspondence Lessons exactly applicable to this case. You cannot trail and shadow a man who is standing still at a window. Mr. Gubb could think of nothing to do but sit and wait. So he sat and waited.

AS Philo sat on the damp grass, the man at the window turned his head, and Mr. Gubb noted with surprise that the stranger had none of the marks of a



sodden criminal. Indeed, he had no marks of criminality whatever. The face was that of a respectably benevolent old German gentleman. Kindliness and good nature beamed from its lines; ordinarily, the face must have been one to win the love of any child, but at the moment it was slightly clouded by a look of worryment and anxiety. The plump little man seemed in trouble, and to be seeking some one to answer a question, and Detective Gubb spoke to him.

"Good evening," said Mr. Gubb, "I presume you are taking an observation of the dinner-party within the inside of the club."

The old gentleman turned sharply. He looked down at Mr. Gubb, but the golf cup glittering under the detective's arm seemed to reassure him.

"Shess!" he said, and there was no anger in his tone. "I look at der peoples eading and drinking. Always I like to see dot. Blendy to ead and drink! Und sooch goot eaders! Dot man mit der black beard, he vos a schplendid eader!"

Mr. Gubb raised himself to his knees and looked into the dining-room.

"That," he said, "is the Honorable Mr. Jonas Medderbrook, the wealthiest rich man in Riverbank."

"Metterbrook? Metterbrook?" said the old German. "Not Chones, eh?"

"Not Jones, to my present personal knowledge at this time," said Philo Gubb. "Jonas Medderbrook is the name he uses for a cognomen and maybe always has, so far as I know."

"Not Chones!" repeated the plumply benevolent-looking German. "Dot vos stranche! You vos sure he vos not Chones?"

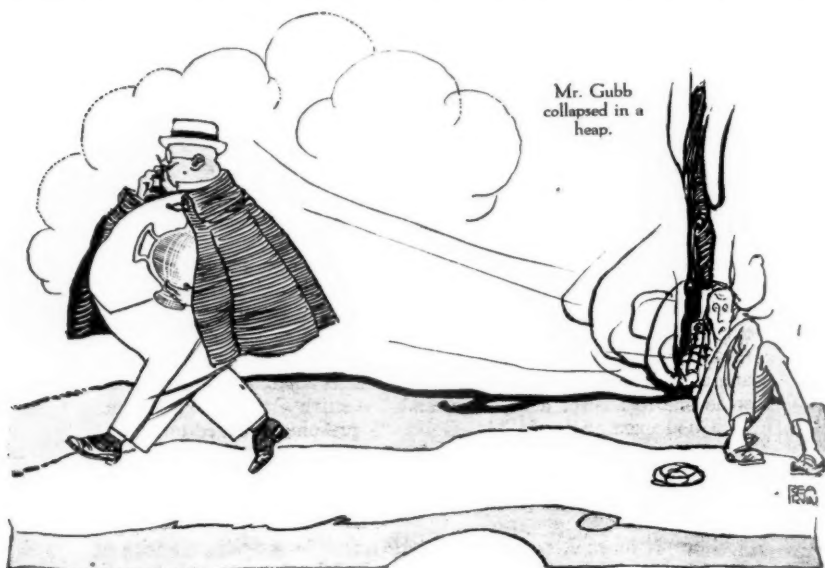
"I'm quite almost positive upon that point of knowledge," said Philo Gubb.

"Und I vos von hunderdt times surer he vos Chones!" exclaimed the German.

"Which is a serious mistake to be mistaken in," said Mr. Gubb, "for I have

the cup and moved closer to the window and read the inscription.

"Shess! Shess!" he agreed, nodding his head several times, and then he smiled at Mr. Gubb a broadly benevolent smile. "Oxcoose me!" he added, and with gentle deliberation he removed Mr. Gubb's hat. "Shoost a minute, please!" he continued, and with his free hand he felt gently of the top of Mr. Gubb's head. He turned Mr. Gubb's head gently to the right. "So!" he exclaimed: "Dot vos goot!" He raised the cup above his head and brought it down on top of Mr. Gubb's head in the exact spot he had



under my arm a golf cup I am returning back to Mr. Medderbrook to receive five hundred dollars reward from him for."

"So?" queried the stranger. "Fife hunderdt dollars? Und it is his cup?"

"It is," said Philo Gubb. He raised the cup in his hand that the stranger might read the inscription stating that the cup was Jonas Medderbrook's.

THE light of the window made the engraving easy to read, but the old German first drew from his pocket a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles and adjusted them carefully on his nose. He then took

selected. For two moments Mr. Gubb made motions with his hands resembling those of a swimmer, and then he collapsed in a heap. The kindly-looking old German gentleman looked at his face and, seeing he was quite unconscious, smiled blandly, tucked the golf cup under his own arm, and waddled slowly down the path to the club gates and so toward the town.

It was perhaps ten minutes later that a small automobile drove up and stopped immediately beside Mr. Gubb, and young Dr. Anson Briggs hopped out. Mr. Gubb was just getting to his feet, feeling the

top of his head with his hand as he did so.

"Here!" said Dr. Briggs. "You must not do that!"

Mr. Gubb felt an enmity for all mankind.

"Why can't I do it?" he asked crossly. "It is my own personal head, and if I wish to desire to rub it, you are not concerned in the occasion whatever."

"Oh, rub your head if you want to!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Rub the hair all off it for all I care. I say you must not stand up. A man that has just had a fit must not stand up. If you do, you'll have another fit."

"Who had a fit?" asked Philo Gubb.

"You did," said Dr. Briggs. "You had a very bad fit and you fell and knocked your head against the building. You're dazed. Lie down!"

"I prefer to wish to stand erect on my feet," said Mr. Gubb firmly. "Fits are not a part of any of my symptoms at any time. Where's my cup?"

"What cup?"

"Who told you I was suffering from the symptom of a fit?" demanded Philo Gubb.

"Why, a short, plump little German did," said the Doctor. "He stopped me as I was entering my house, and said you were having a fit. He had to hurry to catch a train, and he sent me here. And he gave me this to give to you."

THE Doctor held an envelope toward Mr. Gubb, and the detective took it and tore it open. By the light of the window he read:

Rec'd of J. Jones, golf cup worth \$500. Ten \$ change here. P. H. Schreckenheim." Below this was written: "*In full of acct. to date.*"

Philo Gubb turned to Dr. Briggs. There was a ten-dollar bill in the envelope and Mr. Gubb placed this in his pocket.

"I am much obliged for the hastiness with which you came to relieve one you considered to think in trouble, Doctor," he said, "but fits are not in my line of sickness, which mainly is dyspeptic to date. If I should take to fits at any subsequent later date I'll remember you, but at present I am in the midst of an

important job of detecting and I'd wish to be excused from being cured any further at this time."

"Now, what is all this?" asked the Doctor suspiciously. "Was this some dodge to get that letter to you? What is that letter, anyway?"

"It is a clew," said Philo Gubb, "which, connected with the bump on the top of the cranium of my skull will, no doubt, land somebody in jail. So good evening, Doctor."

He picked his hat from the lawn and placed it on his head, and in his most stately manner walked around the clubhouse and in at the door. Dr. Briggs cranked his machine, got into it and rode away.

Inside the club-house, Mr. Gubb asked one of the waiters to call Mr. Medderbrook from the dining-room, and Mr. Medderbrook, expecting the return of his golf cup, immediately appeared in the loafing room. He was a well built man of some sixty years, with a black beard and a weary expression. To the unobservant eye he would have seemed only a well dressed and probably well-to-do citizen, but he had several peculiarities that were noticed but never alluded to by his friends. An ordinary man, sitting at a table with his palms on the table will, for example, in raising his hand for a hand-shake invariably turn his hand palm upward by turning the little finger edge of the hand toward his body. Mr. Medderbrook turned his hand either way.

Those who played golf with Mr. Medderbrook also noticed that sometimes, when looking behind him to see if another player meant to drive, Mr. Medderbrook instead of turning his head back again turned it entirely around in a manner that would have broken an ordinary man's neck. Once, too—but only once—Mr. Medderbrook, in making a stroke from a place where there was no room for both feet to rest comfortably, in seeming carelessness took his right foot in his left hand, raised the foot above his head, hooked his knee over the back of his neck and, with his right leg enwrapping his neck like a boa, made his stroke.

Now, as he came from the dining-room rapidly, the napkin he had had

tucked in his neck fell over his shoulder behind him, and Mr. Medderbrook, instead of turning around and picking it up from the floor, bent down and after placing his hands on the floor, walked on them between his own legs until he could pick up the napkin with his teeth, after which he resumed his normal upright position.

"EXCUSE me, Gubb," he said "I was excited about the cup and didn't think what I was doing. Where is the cup?"

The detective explained. He handed Mr. Medderbrook the receipt that had been sent by Mr. Schreckenheim, and the moment Mr. Medderbrook's eyes fell upon it Mr. Medderbrook turned red.

"That infernal Dutchman!" he cried, although Mr. Schreckenheim was not a Dutchman at all, but a German. "I'll jail him for this! If I have to spend every cent I am worth, I'll jail him for it. Four hundred and ninety dollars! I don't owe him four hundred and ninety dollars, and I never did. I never owed him a cent! The contract said—"

He stopped short.

"Gubb," he said, "did that fellow tell you what his business was?"

"He did not," said Philo Gubb. "He failed to express any mention of it."

"That man," said Mr. Medderbrook bitterly, "is Schreckenheim, the greatest tattoo artist in the world to-day, or that ever was in the world. He is the king of them all. A connoisseur in tattooish art can tell a Schreckenheim as easily as a picture dealer can tell a Corot. But no matter! Mr. Gubb, you are a detective and I believe what is told detectives is held inviolable. Yes. Well, then, I was once in the show line. Don't mention this, for I have put all that away from me. You—and all Riverbank—see in me an ordinary citizen, wealthy, perhaps, but ordinary. As a matter of fact, I was once,"—he looked cautiously around,— "I was once a contortionist. I was once *the* contortionist. In fact, my salary was so large that I could support myself and my wife and my daughter in comfort and put something aside for a rainy day. I put the little surplus in stocks, Mr. Gubb, and—"

He wiped his eye. He seemed to have been drinking rather heavily.

"And now I am a wealthy man. But that is not to the point. When I began to save and learned the pleasure of saving, I became too parsimonious. I wanted to save still more. My wife left me because she said I was stingy. That is not to the point, however. She left me, and she took my child—my only daughter. I have never seen either of them since. I never expect to see them. I have searched high and low, but I cannot find them. But what is that to you, Mr. Gubb? I would give the man that finds my daughter—if she is alive—a thousand dollars. I will give *you* a thousand dollars if you find her, but you never will."

"You don't object to my attempting to try?" said Philo Gubb.

"No," said Mr. Jonas Medderbrook, "but that is not what I wish to explain. In my contortion act, Mr. Gubb, I wore tights, and I was obliged to wear the most expensive silk tights. Wiggling on the floor is hard on tights. It destroys them rapidly. I had a happy thought. I was known as the Man-Serpent, and my tights were woven to represent the scales of a snake. Could I not save all expense of tights by having myself tattooed so that my skin would represent scales? Look."

MR. MEDDERBROOK pulled up his cuff and showed Mr. Gubb his arm. It was beautifully tattooed in red and blue, like the scales of a cobra.

"The first cost," continued Mr. Medderbrook, "was great, but the saving on tights would be greater in time. Herr Schreckenheim worked continuously on me, and when he reached my manly chest I had a brilliant thought. I would have tattooed upon it an American eagle holding an American flag in its claws. Imagine the enthusiasm of an audience after I had contorted and writhed, when I stood straight, spread my arms and showed that noble emblem of our nation's strength and freedom! I told Herr Schreckenheim and he set to work. When—and the contract price, by the way, for doing that eagle alone was four hundred and ninety dollars—when the

eagle was about completed, I said to Herr Schreckenheim, 'Of course you will do no more eagles?'

"More eagles?" he said questioningly. 'On other men,' I said, 'you will do no more eagles. I want to be the only man with an eagle on my chest.'

"I am doing an eagle on a man now," he said.

"I was angry at once. I jumped from the table and threw on my clothes. 'Cheater!' I cried. 'Not another spot or dot shall you make on me! Go! I will never pay you a cent!'

"He was very angry. 'It is a contract,' he cried. 'Four hundred and ninety dollars you owe me!'

"I owe it to you when the job is complete," I declared. 'That was the contract. Is this job complete? Where are the eagle's claws? I'll never pay you a cent!'

"We had a lot of angry words. He demanded that I give him a chance to put the claws on the eagle. I refused. I said I would never pay. He said he would follow me to the end of the world and collect. I said he would never collect until the job was complete and that I would not let him complete it. He said he would do those eagle claws if he had to do them on my infant daughter instead of on me. I dared him to touch the child. And now," said Mr. Medderbrook, "he has collected the money. He has won."

At the mention of the threat regarding the child, Philo Gubb's eyes opened wide, but he kept silence.

"Gubb," said Mr. Medderbrook unsteadily, "I'll give you a thousand dollars if you can recover my poor child. You are a detective, Gubb."

"The detective profession is full of complicity of detail," said Mr. Gubb, "and the possible is often the impossible, but the impossible is quite possible when put in the right hands. The cup—"

"Bother the cup!" said Mr. Medderbrook carelessly. "I want my child—my poor little feeble child—my poor little child, maybe starving on the streets. Cup's all right, Gubb. Reward for cup, but I'll give thousand dollars for child. Give—I'll give ten thousand dollars for child, Gubb."

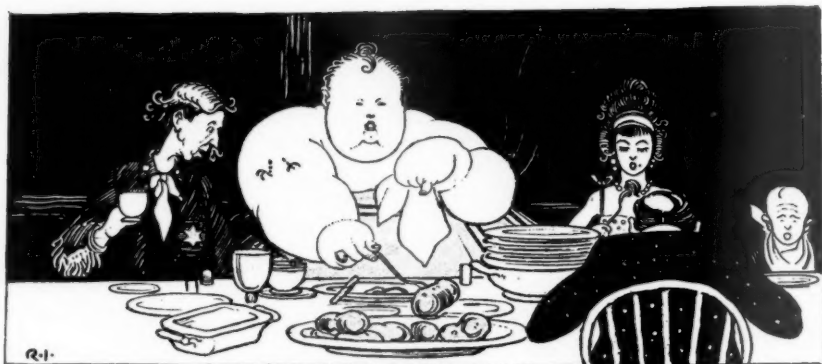
WITH difficulty could Philo Gubb restrain his eagerness to depart. No train left Riverbank until early morning, but he was eager to make the necessary preparations. He had a clue! As he listened to Mr. Medderbrook's story of the threat made by Herr Schreckenheim, the clue had seemed to stand before his eyes so vividly that he could almost touch it.

"Good night, Gubb!" said Mr. Medderbrook, and he returned to the dining-room, where his entry was greeted with cheers. Philo Gubb walked down to town.

Ordinarily Mr. Gubb would have taken any disguise that seemed to him best suited for the work in hand—which, in this case, would have been that of a farmer, or Number Fifteen in the list of disguises sold by the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting Supply Bureau; but after trying on that farmer disguise in his office above the Riverbank National Bank, in the Opera House Building, Philo cast it aside. The fuzzy under-chin whiskers made him look like a flamingo with its head stuck through a fringed doily, and the garments were far from handsome. Ordinarily, as when he assumed the Tasmanian Wild Man disguise, he sought only to hide his identity; but now he was going to see and be seen by Syril-la!

Mr. Gubb ran down the list—No. 7, *Card Sharp*; No. 9, *Minister of the Gospel*; No. 12, *Butcher*; No. 16, *Negro Hack Driver*; No. 17, *Chinese Laundryman*; No. 20, *Cowboy*. . . . Philo Gubb paused there. He would be a cowboy, for it was a jaunty disguise—"chaps," sombrero, spurs, buckskin gloves, holsters and pistols, blue shirt, yellow hair, stubby mustache. He donned the complete disguise, put his street garments in a suit-case and viewed himself in his small mirror. He highly approved of the disguise. He touched his cheeks with red to give himself a healthy, outdoor appearance.

Early the next morning, before the earliest merchants had opened their shops, Philo Gubb boarded the train for West Higgins, for it was there the World's Greatest Combined Shows were



Syrilla reached for her fifth boiled potato. As her arm passed Mr. Gubb's face, he thrilled.

to appear. The few passengers did not open their eyes; the conductor, as he took Mr. Gubb's ticket, merely remarked, "Joining the show at West Higgins?" and passed on. Boys were already gathering on the West Higgins station platform when the train pulled in, and they cheered Mr. Gubb, thinking him part of the show. This greatly increased the difficulty of Mr. Gubb's detective work. He had hoped to steal unobserved to the circus grounds, but a dozen small boys immediately attached themselves to him. They clung as closely as the trunk clings to the elephant and in about the same relative position, running before him and whooping with joy.

"**BOYS,**" said Mr. Gubb sternly, "I wish you to run away and play elsewhere than in front of me continuously and all the time."—and they cheered because he had spoken. He entered a restaurant, and they entered with him. Only the glad news that the circus trains had reached town finally dragged them reluctantly away. Detective Gubb slipped out and hurried to the circus grounds, taking long strides and glancing neither to the right nor left. The cook tent was already up, and the grub tent was being put up, and the roustabouts paid no attention to Mr. Gubb as he walked over the grounds, planning his attack. Presently the Side-show tent was up and the "big top" was rising. It was not until nine o'clock, however, that the Side-show ladies and gentlemen began to appear, and when they arrived

they went at once to the grub-tent and seated themselves at the table. From a corner of the "big top's" side wall, Detective Gubb watched them.

"Look there, dearie," said Syrilla suddenly to Princess Zozo, "don't that cowboy look like Mr. Gubb that was at Bardville yesterday and got the golf cup?"

"It don't look like him," said Princess Zozo; "it *is* him. Why don't you ask him to come over and help at the eats. You seemed to like him yesterday."

"I thought he was a real gentlem'nly gentlemun, dearie, if that's what you mean," said Syrilla; and raising her voice she called to Mr. Gubb. For a moment he hesitated, and then he came forward. "We knowed you the minute we seen you, Mr. Gubb. Come and sit in beside me and have some breakfast if you aint dined. I thought you went home last night. You aint after no more crim'nals, are you?"

"There are variously many ends to the deteckative business," said Mr. Gubb, as he seated himself beside Syrilla. "I'm upon a most important case at the present time."

SYRILLA reached for her fifth boiled potato, and as her arm passed Mr. Gubb's face he thrilled. He had not been mistaken. Upon her arm was a pair of eagle's claws, tattooed in red and blue! How little these had meant to him on the previous day, and how much they meant now!

"I presume you don't hardly ever long

for a home in one place, Miss Syrilla," he began, with his eye fixed on her arm just above the elbow.

"Well, believe me, dearie," said Syrilla, "you don't want to think that just because I travel with a side show I don't long for the refinements of a true home just like other folks. Some folks think I'm easy to see through and that I aint nothin' but fat and appetite, but they've got me down wrong. Mr. Gubb, I was unfortunate in gettin' lost from my father and mother when a babe, but many is the time I've said to Zozo, 'I got a refined strain in my nature.' Haven't I, Zozo?"

"You say it every time you start to blubber when we begin to rag you about fallin' in love with every new thin man you see," said Princess Zozo. "You said it last night when we was joshin' you about Mr. Gubb here."

Syrilla colored, and Mr. Gubb moved uneasily.

"Just the same, dearie," Syrilla said to Princess Zozo, "I've got myself listed right when I say I got a refined nature. I've got all the instincts of a real society lady and sometimes it irks me awful not to be able to let myself loose and bant like—"

"Bant?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"Bant was the word I used, Mr. Gubb," Syrilla replied. "Maybe you wouldn't guess it, lookin' at me shovelin' in the eatables this way, but eatin' food is the croolest thing I have to do. It jars me somethin' terrible. Yes, dearie, what I long for day and night is a chance to take my place in the social stratum I was born for and bant off the fat like other social ladies is doin' right along. I don't eat food because I like it, Mr. Gubb, but because a lady in a profession like mine has got to keep fatted up. My outside may be fat, Mr. Gubb, but I got a soul inside of me as skinny as any fash'nable lady would care to have, and as soon as possible I'm goin' to quit the road and bant off a couple of hundred pounds. Would you believe it possible that I aint dared to eat a pickle for over seven years, because it might start me on the thinward road?"

"I presume to suppose," said Mr. Gubb, "that if you was to be offered a

home that was rich with wealth and I was to take you there and place you beside your parental father, you wouldn't refuse?"

MR. GUBB awaited the reply with eagerness. He tried to remain calm, but in spite of himself he was nervous.

"Watch me!" said Syrilla. "If you could show me a nook like that, you couldn't hold me in this show business with a tent-stake and bull tackle. But that's a rosy dream!"

"You aint got a locket with the photo' of your mother's picture in it?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"No," said Syrilla. "My pa and ma were unknown to me. I dare say they got sick of hearin' me bawl and left me on a door-step. The first I knew of things was that I was travelin' with a show, representin' a new-born babe in an incubator machine. I was incubated up to the time I was five years old, and got to be too long to go in the glass case."

"But some one was your guardian in charge of you, no doubt?" asked Gubb.

"I had forty of them, dearie," said Syrilla. "Whenever money run low, they quit because they couldn't get paid on Saturday night."

"Hah!" said Mr. Gubb. "And does the name Jones bring back the memory of any remembrance to you?"

"No, Mr. Gubb," said Syrilla regretfully, seeing how eager he was. "It don't."

"In that state of the case of things," said Mr. Gubb, "I've got to go over to that wagon-pole and sit down and think awhile. I've got a certain clue I've got to think over and make sure it leads right, and if it does I'll have something important to say to you."

The wagon-pole in question was attached to a canvas-wagon near by, and Detective Gubb seated himself on it and thought. The Side-show ladies and gentlemen, having finished their meal, entered the Side-show tent—with the exception of Syrilla, who remained to finish her meal. She ate a great deal at meals, before meals, and after meals. Mr. Gubb, from his seat on the wagon pole, looked at Syrilla thoughtfully. He had not the least doubt that Syrilla was

the lost daughter of Mr. Jones (or Medderbrook as he now called himself). The German tattoo artist had sworn to complete the eagle by putting its claws on Mr. Jones' daughter, if need be, and here were the claws on Syrilla's arm. But, just as it is necessary at times to have a handwriting expert identify a bit of writing, Mr. Gubb felt that if he could prove that the claws tattooed on Syrilla's arm were the work of Mr. Schreckenheim, his case would be stronger. He longed for Mr. Schreckenheim's presence but, lacking that, he had a happy idea. Mr. Enderbury, the tattooed man of the Side-show, would perhaps be able to identify the eagle's claws. Leaving Syrilla still eating, Mr. Gubb entered the Side-show tent.

MR. ENDERBURY, seated on a blue property case, was engaged in biting the entire row of finger-nails on his right hand, and a frown creased his brow. He was enwrapped by a long purple bathrobe which tied closely about his neck. As he caught sight of Mr. Gubb, he started slightly and doubled his hand into a fist, but he immediately calmed himself and assumed a nonchalant air. As a matter of fact, Mr. Enderbury led a dog's life. For years he had loved Syrilla devotedly, but he was so bashful he had never dared to confess his love to her, and year after year he saw her smile upon one man after another. Now it was Mr. Lonergan; again it was Mr. Winterberry—or it was Mr. Gubb, or Smith, or Jones, or Doe; but for Mr. Enderbury she seemed to have nothing but contempt. Mr. Enderbury had seen her first when she was posing in the infant incubator, and had loved her even then, for he was twenty when she was but five. The coming of a new rival always affected him as the coming of Mr. Gubb had, but for some reason he hated Mr. Gubb worse than any of the others.

"Excuse me for begging your pardon," said Mr. Gubb, pausing at the side of Mr. Enderbury, "but in the detective business questions have to be asked. Have you ever chanced to happen to notice some tattoo work upon the arm of Miss Syrilla of this Side-show?"

"I have," said Mr. Enderbury.

"A pair of eagle's claws," said Mr. Gubb. "Can you tell me, from your knowledge and belief, if the work there done was the work of a Mr. Herr Schreckenheim?"

"I can tell you if I want to," said Mr. Enderbury. "What do you want to know for?"

"If those claws are the work of Mr. Herr Schreckenheim," said Mr. Gubb, "I am prepared to offer to Miss Syrilla her place in a home of wealth at Riverbank, Iowa. If those claws are Schreckenheim claws, Miss Syrilla is the daughter of Mr. Jonas Medderbrook of the said burg, beyond the question of a particle of doubt."

Mr. Enderbury looked at Mr. Gubb with surprise.

"That's non—" he began. "And if Schreckenheim did those claws, you'll take Syrilla away from this show? Forever?" he asked.

"I will," said Philo Gubb, "if she desires to wish to go."

"Then I have nothing whatever to say," said Mr. Enderbury, and he shut his mouth firmly; nor would he say more.

"DO you desire to wish me to understand that they are not the work of Mr. Herr Schreckenheim?" persisted Mr. Gubb.

"I have nothing to say," said Mr. Enderbury.

"I consider that conclusive circumstantial evidence that they are," said Detective Gubb, and he clanked out of the Side-show. Syrilla was still seated at the grub table, finishing her meal, and Mr. Gubb seated himself opposite her. As delicately as he could, he told of Jonas Medderbrook and his lost daughter, of the home of wealth that awaited that daughter, and finally, of his belief that Syrilla was that daughter. It was clear that Syrilla was quite willing to take up a life of refinement and dieting if she was given an opportunity such as Mr. Gubb was able to offer in the name of Jonas Medderbrook; and, this being clear, he questioned her regarding the eagle's claws.

"Mr. Gubb," she said, "I wish to die on the spot if I know how I got them

claws tattooed onto me. If you ask me, I'll say it is the mystery of my life. They've been on me since I was a little girl no bigger than—why, who is that?"

Mr. Gubb turned his head quickly, but he was not in time to see a plump, good-natured-looking little German slip quickly out of sight behind the cook tent. Neither did he see the glitter of the sun on a large silver golf cup the plump German carried under his arm; but the German had recognized Mr. Gubb, even through his disguise of a cowboy.

"No matter," said Syrilla. "But, these claws have been on my arm since I was a wee little girl, Mr. Gubb. I always thought they was a trademark of a hospital."

"I was not knowingly aware that hospitals had trademarks," said Mr. Gubb.

"Maybe they don't," said Syrilla. "But when I was a small child I had an accident and had to be took to a hospital, and it wasn't until after that that anybody saw the eagle's claws on me. I considered that maybe it was like the laundry puts a mark on a handkerchief it has laundered."

"I don't know much about the manners of the ways of hospitals," admitted Mr. Gubb, "and that may be so, but I have another idea. Did you ever hear of Mr. Herr Schreckenheim?"

"Only that Mr. Enderbury is always cross on the days of the month that he gets Mr. Schreckenheim's statements of money due. Mr. Schreckenheim is the man that tattooed Mr. Enderbury so beautiful, but poor Mr. Enderbury has never been able to pay him in full."

Philo Gubb arose.

"I am going to telegraph Mr. Medderbrook to come on to West Higgins immediately by the three p. m. afternoon train," he said, "and you will meet him as your paternal father and arrange to make your home with him as soon as you desire to wish it."

AT five o'clock that afternoon, Mr. Medderbrook, escorted by Mr. Gubb, entered the Side-show tent. The lady and gentlemen freaks were resting before evening grub, and all were gathered around Syrilla's platform, for the news that she was to leave the show to enter

a home of wealth and refinement had spread quickly. Syrilla herself was in tears. She was loath to part from her kind companions.

"I tell you, Mr. Gubb," Mr. Medderbrook said, as they entered the Side-show, "if you have indeed found my daughter you have made me a happy man. You cannot know how lonesome my life has been. Now, which is she?"

"She is the female lady in the pink satin dress on that platform," said Mr. Gubb. Mr. Medderbrook looked toward Syrilla and gasped.

"Why, that—that's the fat woman! That's the fat woman of the Side-show!" he exclaimed. "I thought—I—why, my daughter wouldn't be a fat woman in a side-show!"

"But she is," said Mr. Gubb.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Medderbrook.

For years Mr. Medderbrook had retained a memory of his daughter as he had seen her last, a babe in long clothes. As he rode toward West Higgins, however, he had thought about his daughter and he had revised his conception of her. She was older now, of course, and he had finally settled the matter by deciding that she would be a dainty slip of a girl—probably a tight-rope walker or one of the toe-dancers in the Grand Spectacle, or perhaps even engaged as the ten-thousand-dollar beauty. But a Fat Lady! Mr. Medderbrook walked toward Syrilla. Every eye in the tent was upon him. There was utter silence except for Syrilla's happy sobbing.

"Shess!" said a voice suddenly. "You bet I vos here! Und I vant my money! Years I haf been collectding dot bill, und still you owe me. Now I come, und you pay me all vot you owe or I make troubles!"

The voice came from outside the tent, and with surprising agility Detective Gubb dived under the platform and wriggled under the canvas wall.

"I don't owe you a cent!" exclaimed the voice of Mr. Enderbury. "I've paid you for every bit of tattoo I have on me."

"Seven hunderdt dollars vos der contract," cried the voice of Herr Schreckenheim. "Und ten dollars is due me yet. I vant it."

"Well, you'll keep on wanting it," said Mr. Enderbury's voice. "Look here! Look at my chest. There's the eagle you did on me—do you see any claws on it? No, you don't! Well, I'm not going to pay for claws that are not on me. No, sir!"

"Claws? I do some claws on you, don't I, ven I do dot eagle?" asked the German.

"Yes, but they're not on me now, are they?" asked Mr. Enderbury. "You can go and collect from the person that has them. What do I care for her now? She's going to quit the circus business. I've paid for all the tattoo that's on me; you go and collect ten dollars for those claws from Syrilla."

"Und how does she get those claws on her?" asked Herr Schreckenheim shrewdly.

"I'll tell you how," said Mr. Enderbury. "You remember when Griggs' & Barton's Circus burned down years ago? Well, she was burned in that fire—burned on the arm—and they took her to a hospital and the wee kid's arm wouldn't heal. So somebody had to furnish some skin for a skin-grafting job, and I did it. And that was the only spot on me that wasn't a gem of art, so I gave that piece. That's what happened, and I gave those eagle's claws to cure her, and I've hung around her all these years like a faithful dog, and she don't care a hang for me, and now she's going away. Go and collect for those claws from her.

I haven't got them. She's going to be rich; she can pay you!"

Simultaneously there was an exclamation of relief from Mr. Medderbrook, a cry of love that sounded like "Enderbury!" from Syrilla, and a short, sharp yell from outside the tent. Mr. Gubb entered, spurs first, creeping backward under the canvas. As he backed from under the platform it was observed that he held a shoe—about No. 8 size—in one hand, and that a foot was in the shoe, and the foot on a leg and the leg on a short, plump, elderly German, who yelled as he was dragged into the tent on his back. In one hand of the German was a large silver golf cup with a deep dent on one side. As Mr. Gubb arose to his feet, still holding the German tattoo artist's foot in his hand, he said:

"Mr. Medderbrook, the detective business is not always completely satisfactory in all kinds of respects, and it looks as if it appeared that the daughter I found for you is somebody else's, but if you will look at the other end of the assaulter and batterer I have in hand, you will see that I have recovered the silver golf cup trophy once again for the second time."

"And that," said Mr. Medderbrook as he took the cup from the German's hand, "is remarkable work. The ordinary detective is usually satisfied to recover stolen property once."

"The motto of my detective business," said Mr. Gubb modestly, "is 'Perfection, no matter how many times.'"

The next story of Philo Gubb, entitled "*The Missing Mr. Master*," will be in the October Red Book Magazine.

W a g e s

By John Barton Oxford

Author of "Its Own Reward," etc.

"WAGES" is the story of a wasted life. It is told with that quality which has made the author's work unique among magazine writers.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

I DO not presume to say why the thought of a white cockatoo in Morey Dahlen's possession should have struck me as so absurdly incongruous. For one thing, there is no accounting for tastes; for another, I had not seen Morey for something over ten years, and in ten years a man may change in ways that his best friends or his worst enemies would never have suspected. For these reasons, if for no others, I should have been quite prepared to see Morey Dahlen with almost any sort of a bird or reptile in tow; for Morey, disguise the fact as genially as he would, had always been, when all was said and done, temperamental.

Therefore, that white cockatoo should not have made the tremendous impression upon me that it did. I did not know at first that it was a cockatoo in that awkwardly wrapped parcel which Morey carried. It was that time of the year when everybody who had the time and the price—the inclination was universal—was leaving the city. The first hot wave of summer was upon us rather earlier than usual, and the station was packed with travelers for the seashore and the mountains and the big green North woods.

Having finally corralled one of the

collarless, perspiring, short-tempered gentlemen in the outer baggage-room and induced him duly to check the family baggage, I had turned away and was crossing the oven-like waiting-room, when I collided with a tall, dark man, immaculate in his blue serge and displaying about him no hint of the city's stifling heat.

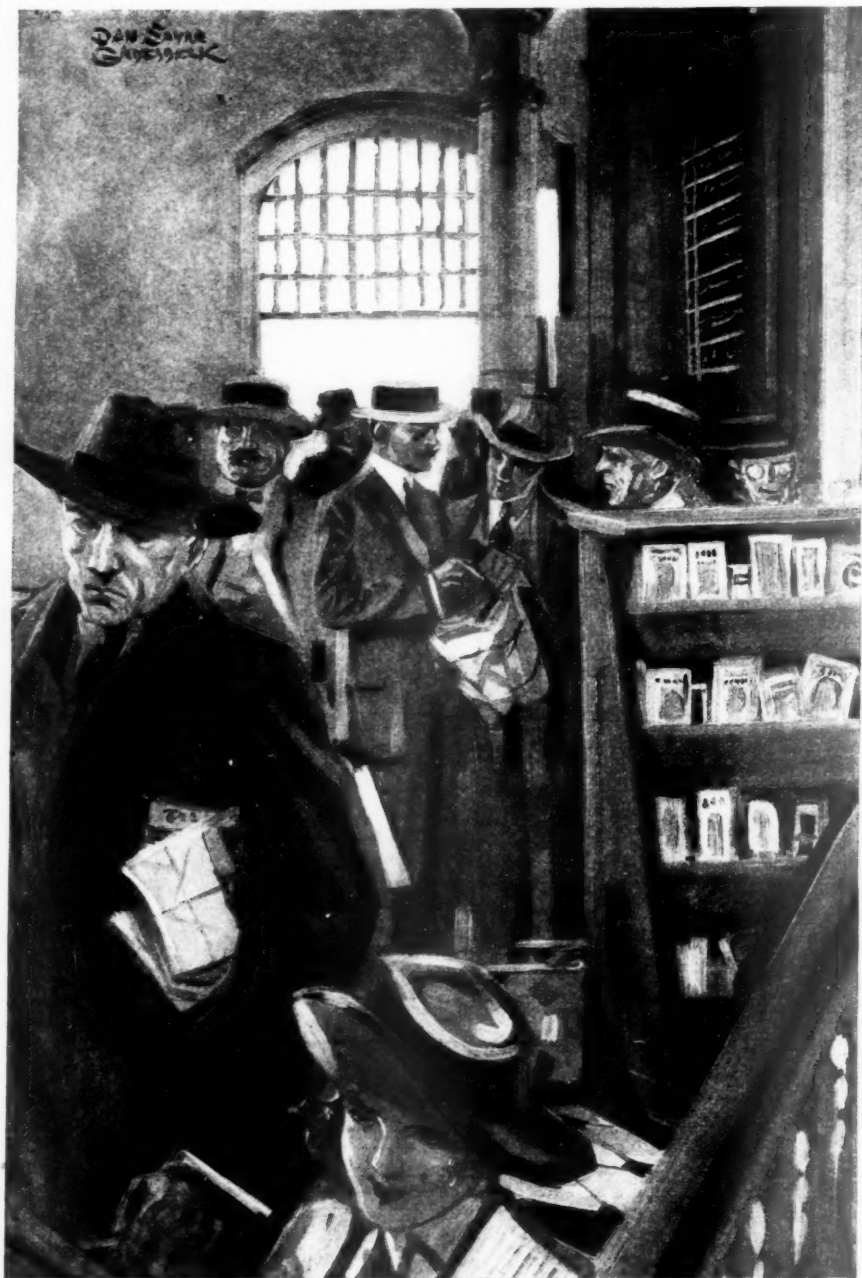
I stopped short; so did he. There was something quite as familiar about that cool-looking serge-clad figure as there was about the high cheek-bones and the olive smoothness of the skin.

We both gasped simultaneously, and simultaneously our right hands shot out, although his perhaps was just a trifle slower by reason of his transferring that awkwardly wrapped parcel I have mentioned, from his right hand to his left.

"Tommy, old boy, I'm hanged!" said he.

"Morey Dahlen, of all people!" I was saying with all the originality usual at such a time.

We ran through all the stereotyped inanities that are uttered upon such occasions. Years ago Morey Dahlen and I, two irresponsible youngsters seeking our first footholds in the world, had been pretty close to each other. It didn't seem possible it had been ten years since we had seen each other.



I was trying to say something sympathetic, and I was succeeding badly, for a torrid, crowded terminal on a late June day isn't the best fostering place in the world for sympathy.

"And I hear you're a family man now, Tommy," said he.

"Three boys," I answered proudly. "The youngest is named after you."

"After me?" he repeated, and I thought he seemed pleased, but of course there was nothing else for him to do under the circumstances but *seem* pleased. "I'll have to send him something. Is he too old for cups and that sort of thing? Six? Lord, such truck won't do. Think he'd like an air rifle?"

"What about yourself? Disgorge something," I insisted.

He jerked one shoulder slightly forward, an old trick of his of expressing impatience.

"I'm just the same old piper, Tommy," said he. "I spend a little more because I have it to spend. That's all."

"No family then?" I hazarded.

He winced, ever so slightly, but it was quite perceptible to me.

"No," said he. "The little pink-and-white girl ten years ago—Estelle, you know—that wasn't a go. We drifted apart. There was a chap from Texas with heaps of money, so she didn't even ask for alimony. I was married again, Tommy—five years ago. I wish you might have known her; she was wonderful, Tommy, wonderful. She died three years ago this month. It broke me up badly."

I was trying to say something adequately sympathetic, and I was succeeding badly, for a torrid, crowded terminal on a sweltering late June day isn't the best fostering place in the world for sympathy, when from that paper-swathed bundle in Morey's left hand came a series of low-pitched, throaty squawks. I probably started; anyway, Morey grinned.

"Preeno doesn't like to travel," he explained. "He's swearing a bit about it in his own way. I don't know that I blame him. It's terribly stuffy in here, and Preeno is fussy about fresh air, aren't you, old boy?"

He pulled away the paper at the top of the bundle and motioned me to look within. In a stout wooden traveling cage, a snowy white cockatoo with its plumage ruffled and its crest angrily erect stalked about the narrow quarters,

now pulling at the wooden bars with its hooked beak, now uttering the disgruntled squawks that I had first heard.

"Oh, come now, come now," said Morey, addressing the bird in soothing tones. "Sit tight for a bit. I'm not putting you through this because I want to, old boy. Listen: to-night you'll be on your perch at the North Glen House; there'll be air enough there for you. You'll forgive me for this when you strike those cool nights in the mountains."

The cockatoo stopped its irritable pulling at the bars of the cage and perked its head on one side. It looked up at Morey with something like understanding. It began to make softer clucking sounds, quite different from the harsh squawks.

"Yes, I'm right here," said Morey, thrusting his finger into the top of the cage.

Instantly the cockatoo hopped up on the one perch and caught Morey's protruding finger in its hooked beak. It clung to that finger tenaciously, yet I could see that the touch of the beak was light.

"Now you know I'm right here with you, and all's rosy again, isn't it?" said Morey.

Again came that soft clucking sound from the bird.

Morey evidently noticed the surprise on my face, for he turned to me with a slow smile.

"Oh, we're great pals. Preeno and I," said he. "We have some great old chats together. We understand each other. He goes everywhere I go. I've had him a year now, and we have a great many years ahead of us, I hope. Cockatoos are long-lived, you know. They live to be forty or fifty, often. So Preeno, you see, is in all probability good for this vale of tears as long as I am; he was only two years old when I got him."

His tone had changed as he spoke. It was no longer slow and repressed. It had grown eager, anxious, argumentative, like that of a man who is speaking to convince himself. There was something about it, too, that I did not like—an undercurrent of almost agonized tenderness. It left me staring dumbly at

Morey, wondering what manner of man was this before me. Surely, it was not the Morey Dahlen I had known of old.

I stared harder, while Morey in the same tone rattled on about the longevity of cockatoos and quoted various authorities to prove his statements. In the midst of it he glanced at the big clock on the wall.

"My train pulls out in three minutes," said he, "so I'll have to hustle out and get aboard. So long, Tommy! It's mighty good to have seen you again. I have the orchestra at the North Glen House this summer. Come and see me there, if you find a chance. Good-by!"

He hurried down the waiting-room and out into the train-shed. I suddenly began to laugh. It amused me immensely that a man I had not seen for ten years should spend the bulk of the few brief minutes the chance meeting had given us talking to me earnestly, as if his very life depended upon it, about the longevity of cockatoos.

Then suddenly I grew sober. It wasn't at all like Morey Dahlen to do a thing like that. Neither, when I came to think it over, were several other things at all like him—for instance, his slow, careful speech, his infrequent smiles, the more than subtle hints of melancholy about him. I began to wonder what those ten years might have done to him, and I was still pondering the subject when I climbed aboard my own train.

HOWEVER, as is ever the way of such things, I presently forgot all about Morey Dahlen and his white cockatoo. It was late August before he again came into my mind. I was motoring with my brother-in-law, when a wayside signboard setting forth the desirability of the dinners at the North Glen House recalled the fact that Morey had said he was to have the orchestra there that summer.

With one of those inspirations of the moment, I suggested to my brother-in-law that he drop me at the North Glen House, go on to Cloudy Lake, whither we were headed, and pick me up late in the afternoon on his way back.

This plan we followed out. We reached the North Glen House at lunch

time. The orchestra was playing on the veranda outside the big dining-room. We had our lunch together and then my brother-in-law went on alone.

I waited until the last piece on the lunch-time program had been finished, and then strode to the end of the veranda, where the musicians were putting up their instruments.

Morey seemed very glad to see me. He was a rather imposing figure in his trim white flannels, tall, straight, distinguished-looking. We sat down in a quiet corner and lighted cigars from my case.

But scarcely were the weeds going when Morey arose.

"Come up and see Preeno," he commanded rather than invited. "He likes it up here. It agrees with him. He isn't the sorry-looking bird you saw in his cage in the station that day."

Because there was nothing else to do I followed him down the veranda towards the big entrance doors at the office. And at those doors something happened to deepen my quandary about Morey Dahlen.

Just as we were about to enter, a girl came out of the doors and ran lightly down the steps to the little patch of lawn hedged in by the surrounding rocks. She was a very beautiful young creature, tall, slim, radiant with youth. She was the sort of girl to make a man involuntarily lift his shoulder, the sort you quite involuntarily follow with your eyes.

The Morey Dahlen I had always known had been far from impervious to a pretty face. Indeed, I fear that old Morey Dahlen had been very much of a philanderer, taking life and the good things of life lightly wherever they came to hand, enjoying them to the fullest for the moment, forgetting them quite as promptly the next. And that old Morey Dahlen had been the sort of man who finds much favor in women's eyes—good-tempered, sympathetic, winningly gentle—oh, far too winningly gentle. Wherefore, in those old days I had forgiven Morey Dahlen much. You always forgive much to a man of Morey's type.

But, knowing him as I did—or as I

thought I did—I prepared myself when that smooth-cheeked, soft-eyed child-woman ran down the steps, to hear that deep intake of his breath, as I had heard it so many times under similar circumstances—to feel the tightening of his fingers on my arm, to hear his enthusiastic whisper: "Old chap! Old chap! Look there! There was never another like that one!"

What then, was my unbounded surprise when he did not seem to see her, when he went on into the doorway still talking of Preno and of three new tricks the bird had learned since coming here. I began to surmise those ten years had done even more to him that I had thought.

The rooms assigned the musicians were in one of the wings of the house at the very top. They were small but in no wise uncomfortable.

Morey's windows looked out on Bald Mountain, rising, wooded slope on wooded slope, towards the low-hung clouds.

It was a very much littered room. There were guns and golf-sticks and tennis racquets and fishing-tackle and at least three cameras of the expensive variety. All these things looking equally disused, I concluded Morey had been spending quite a little money in vain attempts to interest himself. Preno hopped about on an ornate brass perch by one of the windows. That perch was the one thing in the room which was free from dust and showed signs of unflagging care.

"Now," said I, pulling a chair close to one screened window, "we have a good three hours before Jim is back in the car to pick me up. Tell me all about yourself."

But if I hoped for any more minute details of those ten years, I was doomed to disappointment. Morey coaxed the bird from the perch, put him on the little painted center table, and proceeded to send him through a series of studied and highly amusing stunts.

And again there was the long dissertation and the quoting of authorities as to the longevity of cockatoos. It seemed to be a fetich with the man. I couldn't understand it. And the more I listened to him the less I understood it.

I grew terribly bored, finally, with the

endless tricks and Morey's endless talking to the bird. I think I dozed. Anyway, I don't remember seeing him dig up the collar and its leash, the smaller collar, with the bells, nor the big photograph. I suddenly saw Morey standing before me with all these things in his hands. He was holding out the larger collar, with the bells, towards me.

"This is all I have to remember Donny by," he was saying. "He was a wonder, poor little Donny was. I was just getting terribly attached to him when he died. Stunning brute."

He passed me a photograph of a pert-looking little Boston terrier.

"Most knowing little creature, and the best of pals, we were," he rattled on, while I stared rather sleepily at the picture. "They tell me Bostons aren't very rugged. They've been too much inbred to have much stamina. It shook me up quite a bit when I lost him. Distemper, they say it was. And this was Shah, my next venture."

He passed me a colored photograph of a blue Persian kitten, and at the same time he held out the tiny collar with its row of tinkling bells.



She was the sort of girl to make a man involuntarily lift his shoulders.

Donny
Morey

"Blue Persians are rather delicate creatures, too, I've learned since," he went on. "I wish you might have seen Shah. He was very fond of me. He always lay in my lap when I read or smoked. He seemed to understand what I said to him, too. I'd had him less than a year when he died. Then I bought Peter. This is Peter."

He thrust into my hands the picture of a Hartz Mountain canary.

"Sing? What a throat that little beggar had on him. I wish you might have heard him. I'd leave his cage door open nights, and he'd come out in the morning and stand on the coverlet of my bed and nearly burst that small throat of his trying to waken me so I'd get up and feed him a bit of lettuce or apple."

I was muttering the usual forced words of interest. I doubt if Morey noticed they were forced, or if, indeed, he heard them at all.

"The hook that held up his little cage," he said at length with a certain choking explosion of his breath, "—I must have been careless in putting it up. It wasn't fastened securely—just caught in the plastering, you know. It worked loose. The cage fell and killed him. I went through it all again."

I stared at him.

"What I went through when I lost Donny, and again when I lost Shah," he explained, noting, I suppose, my blank expression, "—the loneliness, the awful sense of losing something you cared for—cared too much for."

I must have stared harder, for he said:

"Perhaps you don't understand. I hope you don't."

I felt strangely ill at ease as I sat there fumbling the photographs. It was a strange feeling, partly of disgust, rather more, I think now, of pity.

"But cockatoos are long-lived," he went on in a less strained voice. "Why, Perrin in his book about them says, you know,—"

There was another long dissertation on the cockatoo's normal lease of life. I smoked; I squirmed in my chair; I was vastly relieved when the car came back for me somewhat earlier than I had anticipated.

A NOTE in the morning mail at the office some months later brought to my mind that once again I had forgotten all about Morey Dahlen. It read:

I am orchestra leader at the Gaiety this winter. I'm quartered very comfortably at 179 Rutland St. Come and see me when you have nothing better to do. You'll find me in almost any daytime. I go out but little. Sunday evenings, too, I'm always here.

Ever yours,

MOREY.

I really intended for the sake of the old days at least to look him up immediately. I am ashamed to say, however, it was not until one blustery February Sunday evening that I went, and then simply because I found myself at the end of a long Sunday afternoon walk in the vicinity of Rutland Street.

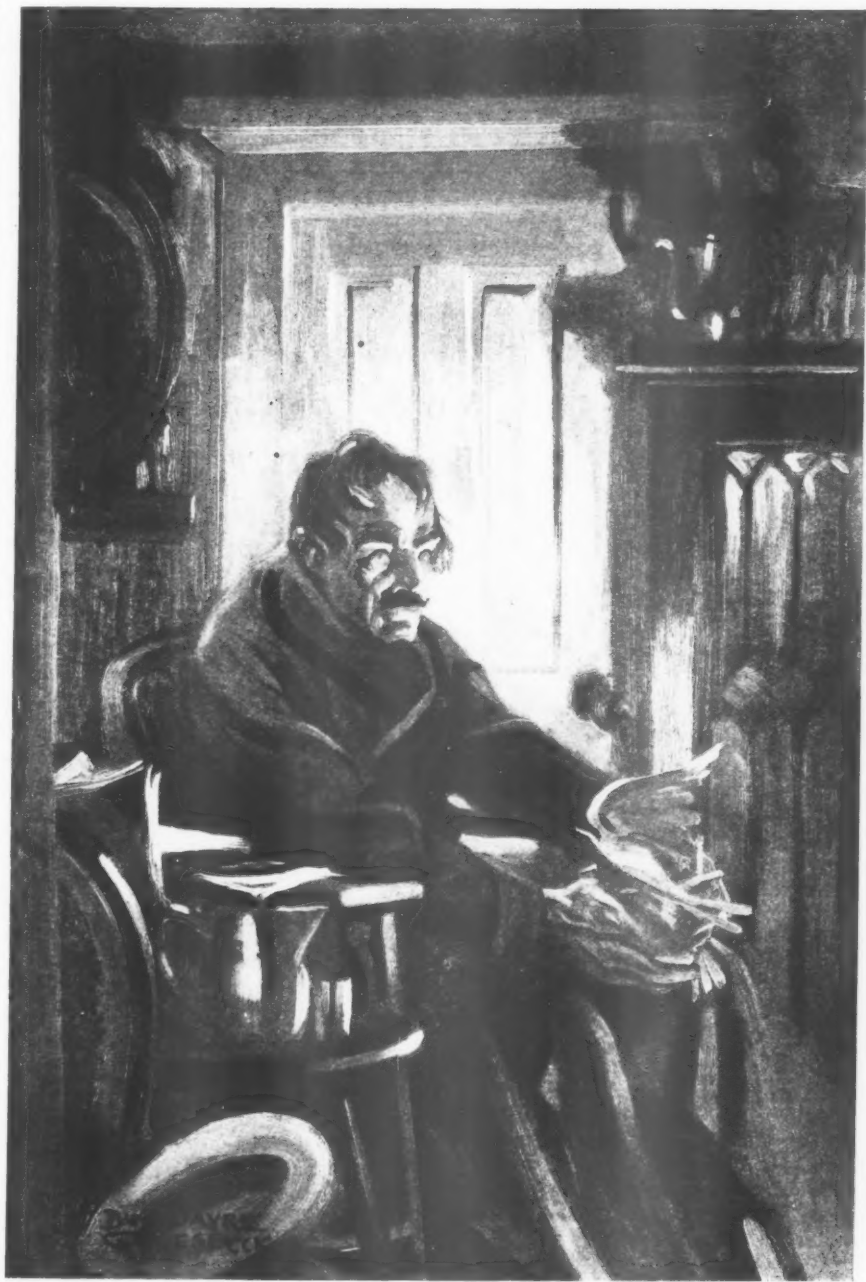
The gusty early winter darkness was settling down. At the corner of Rutland Street when I reached it, the red half-globe over the lamp on a fire-box post made the one touch of color in the dead gray of the winter twilight.

One Hundred and Seventy-nine proved the first house down from the corner. It was a typical lodging house. Morey's room was the typical back-parlor room. It looked out on the tottering fences of unkempt back yards and the monotonous rows of lighted windows in the flat back wall of the houses on the next street.

Like the room at the mountain hotel, it was littered with the dust-covered guns and fishing-tackle and racquets and cameras. A chafing dish on the table showed signs of much use. Stacked beside it were a few plates and some cups and saucers and knives and forks. There was a fire-place in the chimney—a real fire-place with tarnished brass andirons on which a log was burning slowly down to the breaking point.

Preeno's perch was as bright and as well-kept as ever, and Preeno himself, it seemed, had learned many new tricks.

These I witnessed, quite as I had witnessed his other tricks at the mountains; after which Morey insisted upon cooking me some sort of an unholy mess in the chafing dish and brewing me some bitter coffee in a little coffee pot which



I saw Morey huddled in a chair. Something white was in his hands.

bubbled and simmered and bade fair to upset on an arrangement that fitted over one of the gas jets.

Preeno came and perched on the table edge as we ate, and Morey fed him tidbits now and then and talked to him earnestly, quite as if the bird understood everything that was said to him.

I had known in the old days that Morey Dahlen had a warm spot in his heart for all dumb creatures; he was forever stopping to stroke some forlorn cat or taking home a stray dog. But that the thing would become such an obsession with him as this I had never dreamed.

Again that evening I was forced to listen to what the authorities were agreed upon as to the length of a cockatoo's life, and to certain minute details as to the care of the birds. I gathered from Morey's talk that Preeno was to live quite as long as he himself did, maybe longer, and I also gathered in some subtle way that I could not quite explain to myself when I came to think it over, that it was very necessary for Morey's peace of mind that Preeno should thus live and flourish. Mulling it over as I walked homeward that night, I could not get it out of my head that Morey for some reason I was at loss to explain was banking far more on Preeno's continued well-being than was either sensible or normal or sane.

Perhaps it was a sense of duty, a pity for Morey in his strange loneliness, that took me to Rutland Street somewhat more often thereafter than my own inclinations dictated. Anyway, I fell into the habit of dropping in on him quite frequently Sunday evenings.

It was always much the same. Always Preeno in the foreground; always the tiresome dissertations about cockatoos, the care of them, their length of life. Time and again I strove to drag Morey, often by sheer persistence, into other topics of conversation. I tried to talk of the old care-free days; I tried to worm out of him some account of those ten years during which we had not seen each other. And always, strive as I would, the topic came back to Preeno and cockatoos. It was an obsession with the man.

THAT particular Sunday night in April it was raining as I turned into Rutland Street—a cold, drenching, soul-chilling spring mist. The lights shone but dimly through it. The rows of houses on either side loomed up but faint ghosts of their monotonously alike selves.

There was no response when I tapped on the door of that back parlor room. I thought perhaps Morey had stepped out for a moment, so as I often did when I called and he was out at the time, I pushed open the door, intending to make myself at home until he returned. He was never gone for any length of time. The little delicatessen shop down the street was apt to be his farthest jaunt on a Sunday evening.

A fire was dying down on the andirons, and in the soft glow of it I saw Morey Dahlen huddled in a chair before it. Something white was in his hands. He was stroking it with little crooning sounds. It was the white cockatoo—stone dead.

He jumped up as I came in. His eyes were swollen as if from much recent weeping. His voice when he spoke startled me, so hard and bitter was it.

"They live often forty years, even fifty," he said between tight-drawn lips. "Perrin says so, Barnard says so; and yet Preeno is dead. I know now—I'm sure now!"

I would have spoken—cold, soulless, conventional words, I suppose. Evidently he knew that, too, for he forestalled me. He held out a hand.

"I want you to listen to me," he said. "It is the greatest kindness you can do me—to listen."

A drawer in the walnut filigreed bureau was whisked open. A gas jet flared up. A picture was thrust into my hand.

"This is she," he said brokenly. "This is the woman who taught me what real love of woman means, who showed me without ever meaning to show me what it means to be—to be what I was before I met her. You know the old life of mine, Tommy; you know the pretty faces—here to-day, forgotten to-morrow for a prettier one. You know what I was. Did you ever know I laughed when some of them cried? I did! My God,

Tommy, I did! I didn't know until I met her.

"There were two years—two wonderful, wonderful years. Then she died, and the little girl died the next month.

"The loneliness, Tommy, the horrible, horrible loneliness! And once I had laughed when those others had cried.

"I lived like a demented man for six months. Then one day I saw Donny—downtown in a fancier's little shop, it was. He was just a puppy. He was frightened in his little wire-fronted box; he was whining. I put my hand out to him. I knew then what it meant to suffer. He licked my fingers. He didn't seem afraid of me. I bought him. Then he died. So I got Shah, and Shah died; then Peter, and Peter was killed by my own carelessness.

"I began to wonder, then. I began to put two and two together; but I wouldn't believe it. It was too cruel to believe.

"Then one day I saw Preeno in the same shop where I bought Donny. I found out that cockatoos lived years and years, that they were hardy. So I bought Preeno and I came to think more of him than any of the others. He was a test. He would show me what I thought, what I was afraid of, wasn't so.

"Now he's dead. And I know it's so. This is my payment. Anything I love, even a poor dumb thing, is taken from me. It dies. It is my payment. Those pretty faces—I kissed them—I forgot

them—I laughed when they begged and cried. Why, Perrin and Barnard say that cockatoos—"

His voice broke suddenly. He wobbled back to the chair by the fire. He began again smoothing down the ruffled feathers of the white breast, crooning brokenly as he stroked them.

I don't know how long I watched him silently. I know when I spoke my voice surprised me with its sharpness.

"Nonsense! Don't be a fool," said I. "Something he's eaten—"

"I have fed him, and I only have fed him."

"A draught, then—"

"There have been no draughts. I have seen to that."

I grasped at straws.

"Well, everybody knows when birds are molting—"

"This is not the molting season."

I do not think he noticed when I went out. The mist had thickened. The half-globe over the light on the fire-box post made a splotchy halo of red. I stood on the corner waiting for my car.

A cold trickle down the back of my neck brought me to a realization that I was very wetly uncomfortable and that no doubt I had let several of the particular cars I wanted go past unnoticed.

My umbrella was unopened and my raincoat hung over my arm. I had been wondering for some minutes how near the truth Morey Dahlen had come in what he had said to me.

The Best Story in Years

In the October Red Book will appear a long short-story entitled

"The Master of Arms"

By Arthur Stringer

which is the best story of its sort since "Monsieur Beaucaire." It has that same delightful touch that made Booth Tarkington's story live. It's a story to be remembered for many a day.

THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF
MRS. GLYN'S NEW NOVEL



The Man and the Moment

By Elinor Glyn

Author of "The Reason*Why," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES

CHAPTER XXI

WHEN Lord Fordyce found himself alone, he felt as if life itself must leave him; the agony of pain was so great—the fiendish irony of circumstance! It almost seemed that each time he had intended to do a good thing, he had been punished. He had left Arranstoun for the best motive, and so had not seen Sabine; he had taken Michael to Héronac out of friendship, and this had robbed him of his happiness.

But, terrible as the discovery was now, it was not half so terrible as it would have been if the truth had only come to him later, when Sabine had become his wife. He must be thankful for that. Things had always been inevitable; it was plain to be understood that she had loved Michael all along, and all his de-

votion could not have changed this fact. He ought to have known that it was hopeless, that he was only living in a fool's paradise. Never once had he seen the light in her eyes for himself which sprang there even at the mention of Michael's name. What was this tremendous power this man possessed so deeply to affect women, so greatly to charm everyone? Was it just "It," as the Princess had said. Anguish now fell upon Henry; there was no consolation anywhere to be found.

Again he went over all the details of the story he had heard, and himself filled up the links in the chain. How brutal it was of Michael to have induced her to stay—even if she remained of her own accord; and then the frightfully thoughtless recklessness of letting her go away afterwards just because he was angry!

Wild fury blazed up against his old friend. The poor, darling little girl to be left to suffer alone! Oh! how tender and passionately devoted he would have been under the same circumstances.

Would Michael ever make her happy or take proper care of her?

He paced his room, his mind racked with pain. Every single turn of events came back to him, and his own incredible blindness. How had he been so unseeing? How, to begin with, had he not recalled the name of Sabine as being the one he had read long ago in the paper as that of the girl with whom Michael had gone through the ceremony of marriage? It had faded completely from his memory. Everything seemed to have joined forces to lead him on to disaster and misery; even Sabine's and Michael's combining to keep the matter secret from him so as not to cause him pain—all had augmented the suffering now. If—but there was no good in contemplating *if's*; what he had to do was to think clearly as to what would be the wisest course to secure his darling's happiness. That must be his first consideration. After that, he must face his own cruel fate with what courage he could command.

Her happiness could only come through the divorce proceedings being stopped at once, and in her being free to go back to the man whom she loved. This thought hurt most of all. Nothing seemed wanting to cause him, Henry, extra pain.

THEN the aspect that Michael had been willing to do a really fine thing for the sake of friendship struck Henry—perhaps Michael was worthy of Sabine, after all; and they were young and absolutely suited to one another. No, the wickedness would have been if he, whose youth had passed, had claimed her. He was only now going through the same agony his friend must have done, and he had a stronger motive to help him, in the wish to secure the joy of this adored woman, whereas Michael knew he was condemning her to sorrow as well as himself. Yet Michael had been strong enough to do it simply from honor and friendship. Henry had no right to think of Michael as brutal or not fine; and

now it was for him, Henry, to bring back happiness to his darling and to his old friend.

To have to take some decided course came as a relief. He would go out into the village and telegraph to Michael to come to Héronac at once. He was in Paris, staying at the Ritz, he knew; he could be there to-morrow—on Christmas Day! Surely that was well, when peace and good-will towards men should be over all the earth. And he, Henry, would meet him at the house of the Père Anselme and explain all to him and then take him back to Sabine. He would not see her again until then.

He found telegraph forms on his writing table and rapidly wrote:

Come by first train. Meet me at house of Père Anselme.

FORDYCE.

Then he controlled himself and went off with it into the night. The frosty air struck his face and confronted him with its fierceness; the wind was getting up; to-morrow the waves would again be rough.

AFTER Henry sent the telegram, he stopped at the Presbytère. The Père Anselme led him into his bare little parlor and drew him to the warm china stove. It was only two hours since they had parted, but Lord Fordyce looked like an old man.

"I have come to tell you, my father," he said, "that I know all of the story now, and it is terrible enough; but I want you to help me to secure her happiness. Michael Arranstoun is her husband, as you supposed, and she loves him."

The old priest nodded his head comprehendingly, and Henry went on:

"They only parted to save me pain. It was a tremendous sacrifice which, of course, I cannot accept. So now I have sent for him, and I want you to let me meet him here at your house, and explain everything to him. I hope, if he gets my telegram in time, he will catch the train from Paris at midnight to-night; it gets in about nine in the morning. Then they can be happy on Christmas Day."



He was going up the chief staircase to his room when he met Moravia coming down. She had just left Sabine and knew the outline of what had happened.

"You have done nobly, my son." And the Père Anselme lifted his hand in blessing. "It is very merciful that this has been in time. My house is at your service. And how is she, our dear *Dame d'Héronac*? Does she know that her husband will come? Have you told her of your plan?"

"She knows nothing. I told her we should settle all questions to-morrow. She offered to keep her word to me, the dear child."

"And she told you the whole story? She had the courage? Yes? That was fine of her—very fine of her, my son, because she has never spoken of all her sorrow, directly, even to me."

"She told me everything, Father. There are no secrets any more; and her story is a pitiful one, because she was so young."

"It is possible it has been well for them," the priest said meditatively, looking into the glowing fire in the stove whose door he had opened. "They were too young and undisciplined at first for happiness—they have come through so much suffering that now, they will cling to each other and not let joy slip from their hands."

"You have all my deep understanding and sympathy, my son. I too have passed that way, and know your pain. But consolation will come. I find it here in the cure of souls—you will find it in your England, leading your fellow countrymen to finer ends. It is not for all of us, the glory of the dawn or the meridian, but we can all gain a sunset of blessed peace if we will."

And then, as Henry wrung his thin old hand, he muttered with tenderness, "Good-night, and *pax vobiscum*," while a moisture glistened in his keen black eyes.

And when the door was closed on his guest he turned back into his little room, this thought going on with him:

"A great and noble gentleman—though my dame d'Héronac will be happier with the fierce one. Youth must have its day, and all is well."

But Henry, striding in the dark with the sound of the rushing sea for company, found no consolation in his own turbulent thoughts.

WHEN Henry got back to the Château and was going up the chief staircase to his room, he met Moravia coming down. She had just left Sabine and knew the outlines of what had happened. Her astonishment and distress had been great, but underneath, as she was only human, there was some sense of personal upliftment; she could try and comfort the disconsolate lover, at least. Sabine had given her to understand that nothing was finally settled between herself and Henry, but Moravia felt there could be only one end; she knew he was too unselfish to hold Sabine for an instant, once he understood that she would rather be free; so it was in the character of fond friend that she put out her hand and grasped his in silent sympathy.

"Henry," she whispered with tears in her usually merry eyes, "my heart is breaking for you. Can I do anything?"

He would rather that she had not spoken of his sorrow at all, being a singularly reticent person, but he was touched by the love and solicitude in her face, and took and held her white fingers.

"You are always so good to me. But there is nothing to be done."

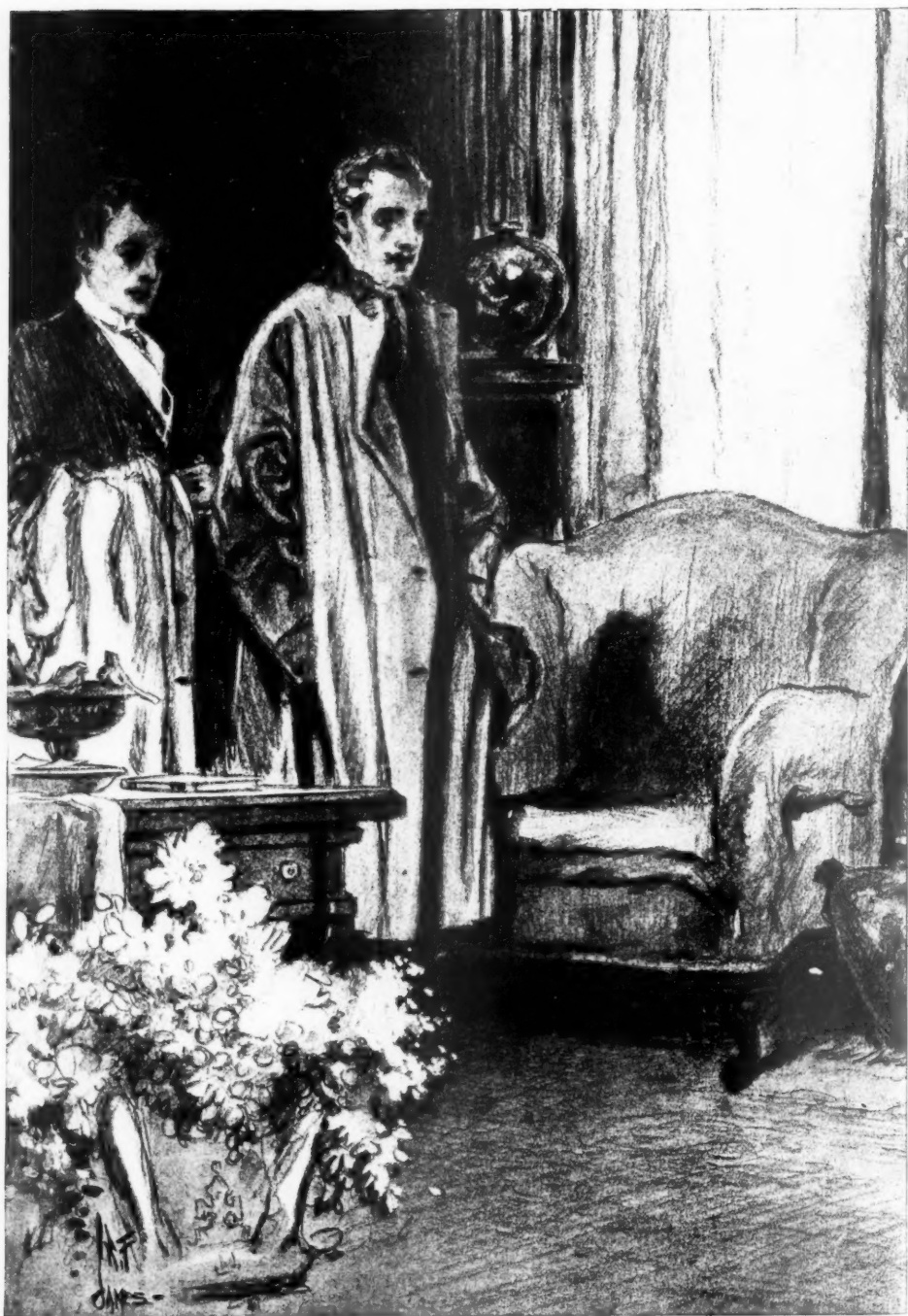
She slid her other hand into his arm and drew him on into a little sitting-room which was set apart for her.

"I am going to take care of you for the next hour, anyway—you look frozen," she told him. "I shall make you sit in the big chair by the fire while I give you something to drink. It is only half-past six."

Then with fond severity she pushed him into a comfortable *bergère* and, leaving him, gave an order to her maid in the next room to bring some brandy. But before it came Moravia went back again and drawing forward a low stool sat down almost at Henry's feet.

The fire and her gentleness were soothing to him, as he lay there huddled in the chair. The physical reaction from the shock was upon him, and he felt almost as if he were going to faint.

Moravia watched him anxiously for some time without speaking; he was so very pale. Then she got up quickly when the maid brought in the tray, and pour-



Her face was deadly pale and showed signs of a night's vigil, but when she caught sight of Michael it was as though the sun had



emerged from a cloud, so radiant grew her eyes. She stood quite still, waiting until they advanced near to her down the long room

ing him out some brandy, she brought it over and knelt down by his side.

"Drink this," she commanded kindly. "I shall not stir until you do."

HENRY took the glass with nerveless fingers and gulped down the liquid as he was bid, but although she re-took the glass from him she did not get up off her knees; indeed, when she had pushed it onto the tray near her, she came closer still and laid her cheek against his coat, taking his right hand and chafing it between her own to bring back some life into him, while she kept up a murmured flow of sweet sympathy—as one would talk to an unhappy child.

Henry was not actually listening to her, but the warmth and the great vibrations of love coming from her began to affect him unconsciously, so that he slipped his arm around her and drew her to his side.

"Henry," she whispered with a little gasp in her breath, "I would take all pain away from you, dear, if I could, but I can't do anything, only just pet and love you into feeling better. After all, everything passes in time. I thought I should never get over the death of my husband, Girolamo, and now I don't care a bit—in fact, I only care about you and want to make you less unhappy."

The Princess thoroughly believed in La Rochefoucauld's maxim to the effect that people are more likely to take a new passion when still agitated by the old one than if they are completely cured. She intended, now that she was released from all honor to her friend, to do her uttermost to draw Henry to herself.

Henry did not answer her; he merely pressed her hand, while he thought how un-English her action was, and how very kind. She was certainly the dearest woman he had ever met—beyond Sabine.

MORAVIA was not all discouraged but continued to rub his hands, first one and then the other, while he remained passive under her touch.

"Sabine is perfectly crushed with all this," she went on. "I have just left

her. She does not know what you mean to do, but I am sure I can guess. You mean to give her back to Mr. Arrans-toun—and it will be much better. She has always been in love with him, I believe, and would never have agreed to try to arrange for a divorce if she had not been awfully jealous about Daisy Van der Horn. I remember now telling her quite innocently of the reports about them in Paris before we went to England, and now that I come to think of it, I noticed she was rather spiteful over it at the time."

Henry did not answer, so she continued, in a frank, matter-of-fact way:

"You can imagine what a strange character Sabine has when I tell you, in all these years of our intimate friendship, she never has told me a word of her story, until just now. She was keeping it all in to herself—I can't think why."

Henry did speak at last, but his words came slowly.

"She wanted to forget, poor little girl, and that was the best way to bury it all out of sight."

"There you are quite wrong," returned Moravia, now seated upon her footstool again, very close, with her elbows propped on Henry's knees, while she still held his hands and intermittently caressed them with her cheek. "That is the way to keep hurts burning and paining forever, fostering them all in the dark; it is much better to speak about them and let the sun get in on them and take all their sorrow away. That is why I would not let you be by yourself now, dear friend, as I suppose one of your reserved country-women would have done. I determined to make you talk about it, to make you realize that there are lots of lovely other things to comfort you, and that you are not all alone."

HENRY was strangely touched at her kind common sense; he already felt better and not so utterly crushed with despair. He told her how sweet and good she was and what a true, unselfish woman—but Moravia shook her head.

"I am not a bit; it is purely interest, because I'm awfully fond of you myself. I *love* to pet you—there!"

And she laughed softly, so happy to see that she had been able even to make this slight effect, for she saw the color had come back in a measure to his face, and her keen brain told her that this was the right tack to go upon—not to be too serious or to show any sentiment, but just to use a sharp knife and cut round the wound and then pour honey and balm into it herself.

"You and Sabine would never really have been happy together," she told him. "You were much too subservient to her. You let her order you about. She would have grown into a bully. Now Mr. Arranstoun wont stand a scrap of nonsense. I am sure; he would make any woman obey him—if necessary by using brute force! They are perfectly suited to one another, and very soon you will realize it and wont care. Do you remember how we talked at dinner that night at Ebbsworth about women having to go through a stage in their lives sooner or later when they adored just strength in a man and wanted a master? Well, I wondered then if Sabine had passed hers, but I was afraid of hurting you, so I would not say that I rather thought she had not."

"Oh, I wish you had!" Henry spoke at last. "And yet, no—the whole thing has been inevitable from the first; I see it plainly. The only thing is, if I had found it out sooner it might have saved Sabine pain. But it is not too late, thank God—the divorce proceedings can be quashed; it would have been a little ironical if she had had to marry him again."

"Yes," Moravia agreed. "Now, if we could only get him to come here immediately, we could explain it all to him and make him wire to his lawyers at once."

"I have already sent for him—I think he will arrive to-morrow at nine."

"How glorious! It was just the dear, splendid thing you would do, Henry," Moravia cried, getting up from her knees. "But we wont tell Sabine; we will just let her mope there up in her room,

feeling as miserable as she deserves to be for not knowing her own mind. We will all have a nice dinner—no, that wont be it. You and I will dine alone here, up in this room, and Papa can talk to Madame Imogen. In this house, thank goodness, we can all do what we like, and I am not going to leave you, Henry, until we have got to say good-night. I don't care whether you want me or not—I have just taken charge of you, and I mean you to do what I wish—there!"

And she crept closer to him again and laid her face upon his breast, so that his cheek was resting upon her soft, dark hair. Great waves of comfort flowed to Henry. This sweet woman loved him, at all events. So he put his arm round her again, while he assured her he did want her, and that she was an angel, and other such terms. And by the time she allowed him to go to his room and dress for dinner, a great measure of his usual nerve and balance was restored. She had not given him a moment to think, even shaking her finger at him and saying that if he was more than twenty minutes dressing, she would herself come and fetch him.

Then, when he had left her, this true daughter of Eve, after ordering dinner to be served to them, proceeded to make herself as beautiful as possible for the next scene. She felt radiant.

"Why, he was on the verge of suicide!" she said to herself, "and now he is almost ready to smile. Before the evening is over I shall have made him kiss me—and before a month is past we shall be engaged. What perfect nonsense to have silly, mawkish sentiment over anything! The thing to do is to win one's game."

CHAPTER XXII

LORD FORDYCE found himself dressing in the usual way and with the usual care, such creatures of habit are we—and yet, two hours earlier, he had felt that life was over for him. Al-

Continued on page 1013 of this issue.

Jane's Pa Loses His Appendix

By Clinton York

Author of "Our Baby's Bath," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY F. FOX

WE'VE all been wondering what under the sun had become of that precocious infant Jane the Second. This story explains.



OW that it is out and bottled, and Jane has forgotten that she was a bit upset herself, it's only natural, perhaps, for her to act superior and say that it is childish of me to blame Jane the Second.

And, to tell the truth, it isn't easy for a father just home after three weeks in the hospital to nurse a grudge against his only child. But it seems to me that a girl fifteen months old and with Jane the Second's advantages ought to begin to be a little more thoughtful of other people.

Jane the Second has her crib in our bedroom on Jane's side where Jane can reach out and cover her up two or three times an hour during the night. I protested at the arrangement in the first place. A man who has to work hard at the office all day and has a touch of insomnia ought to be encouraged when he does try to sleep. I considered Jane the Second old enough to sleep in a room by herself. Jane explained to me that the nursery idea was derived from *nurse*, and that she didn't object if we could hire a competent one. When Jane takes that attitude I never act at all arbitrary but try to weigh both sides of the argument fairly. I decided to ignore the insomnia. Jane was just human enough

to add that with Jane the Second and the house, she kept fairly busy most of the time herself. Jane's human nature is one of her most admirable characteristics, and there is hardly a day when I don't find new reasons to admire her.

It wouldn't have been so bad if Jane the Second had done her sleeping in the night like the rest of us. But, when she insisted on waking up and taking her exercise every morning at five o'clock, the only way I could get the prescribed eight hours of rest that are supposed to go with the other sixteen hours of work was to start undressing by 8:30 P. M. This hurried my supper and was bad for my digestion whenever I was a minute late getting home from the office. But fortunately I read in a Sunday paper that Napoleon and Sarah Bernhardt and some other big ones never took more than four hours' sleep. Since then I've enjoyed myself.

To date, Jane the Second has refused to employ the cruder sounds of conventional speech, but has clung closely to the more primal tones of nature. Promptly at 5:00 A. M. she tests out her barnyard repertory. Her rooster is a bit off color and she isn't satisfied yet with her cow, but she can make a noise like three sheep and a lost calf to perfection. There's no use trying to sleep after she starts in. Our room sounds too much like Wanamaker's toy department with only nine more shopping days before Christmas.

After making her livestock display, Jane the Second's next move is to demand a little reciprocal, entertainment from me. Her favorite game is Ride a cock-horse to Bambury Cross, in which I am the cock-horse. I liked the game myself. I read of a man living to be a hundred by taking physical culture exercises in bed, and Bambury Cross fills all the requirements.

ONE morning about three weeks ago when Jane the Second had finished her pre-breakfast canter, I felt so invigorated I told Jane I'd show her a trick I'd once seen a vaudeville actor do. Jane advised against it, but I insisted, and it would have been all right if Jane the Second had only kept her back stiff and her foot hadn't slipped off my knee. She struck feet first, right into the pit of my whole digestive organism. It makes me shiver yet when I think what would have happened if she had been big enough to wear high-heeled shoes.

I was able to eat a little dry toast and a cup of weak tea for breakfast, but by supper time food didn't interest me. Jane sent for Doc' Hayden. He poked and pushed me around the bed with no apparent consideration for my feelings, and guessed appendicitis. *Appendicitis!* If I hadn't been a mighty sick man, that would have made me angry. I didn't know a thing about appendicitis and I didn't want to, but I knew well enough that appendicitis wouldn't have had the vogue it had a few years ago if it was as bad as my affliction. I suggested that it might be an internal injury and advised an X-ray examination, but Doc' is opinionated and said he didn't interfere with my law and invited me to be as considerate of his profession. Of course

I couldn't absolutely prove that he was wrong, so he went a step further and said that I'd have to have an operation. To satisfy me he sent up a friend of his, Dr. Johnson, a surgeon, to back him up. Dr. Johnson was a positive individual and not at all the sort of a man to go back on a friend, so he poked and pushed and listened to me and guessed appendicitis too. He advised Jane to keep me flat and take me to the hospital the next morning in the ambulance. I balked at the ambulance. It's too suggestive. Dr. Johnson said that many of his best patients rode in the ambulance and thought nothing of it. He assured Jane too that there was nothing to worry about as far as I was concerned, because less than one man in a thousand died of appendicitis anyway. But I'd like to know why she needn't worry! It would have been just my luck to have been the *one!* I was getting so I didn't like him at all, but when Jane the Second woke up just then and stuck her head up over the side of the crib to see what was going on, he was so appreciative and his remarks about her brightness showed so much good common sense that I began to feel better toward him. That and the way I felt where Jane the Second



She insisted on waking up and taking her exercise every morning at five o'clock.

had landed decided me, and I agreed to let him at me the next morning.

I rather expected that Jane and I would stay awake most of the night talking over the past and planning for poor little Jane's future and what Jane ought to do with the insurance money. But Jane is so practical! She brought me a drink of water and tucked me in and gave me a good-night kiss and said that we must both get a good rest so that I would be in the best possible condition in the morning. Jane has such a blind faith in doctors and acted so calm about it that I didn't want to appear weakly emotional. So I turned over and went to sleep. However, I wonder if we as a people aren't a little too flippant in these matters of life and death—particularly in a case like this.

When I woke up I found that Jane had already been up two hours and had Jane the Second all fixed for the day and had made arrangements with Mrs. Baldwin, the woman who takes care of Jane the Second once in a while when we go out anywhere in the evening, to stay with her while I was in the hospital.

When the ambulance came, they took me downstairs on a stretcher that looked like a wicker-work coffin with low sides. I am not at all superstitious but it seemed to me at the time that the hospital authorities might have had their coffin painted a little more cheerfully—and they are absolutely careless of their employees. In going downstairs I slid down the coffin and nearly knocked the front bearer's head off with my feet. If they don't furnish straps, the thing at least ought to have had a lid. And what hurt me most was that the fellow said "Damn" right in front of my wife and daughter and I was in no position to protect them.

Dr. Johnson was waiting for me at the hospital. He acted real bright and cheerful and I tried to be cheery too for Jane's sake—until Dr. Johnson said it was the 615th time he had been called "a little cut-up."

They let Jane stay in the room with me until the ether began to work, and I guess that it is just as well she went, for Dr. Johnson told me afterwards that some way or other I got the impression that I was a merry May-pole and kept singing "Gather round me, girls," and then insisted on being crowned. Jane was in too nervous a condition to understand the springtime spirit of a purely playful May-pole.

THE next thing I remember was that it was almost morning—just getting light—and I thought I'd slip down and warm Jane the Second's milk before she or Jane woke up. But I had such a pain in my stomach and such a mixed-up variety of tastes in my mouth that I knew right off I was in for another of my attacks of indigestion. I had warned Jane of it only a few nights before when we had a hard-boiled egg salad for supper. I decided that I'd feel better if I got a drink of water, but right there beside me was a strange woman with a cauliflower on her head, reading a book! I couldn't see her face and every time I tried to get up she pushed me down again. I knew Jane wouldn't approve having strangers around like that, and I thought she ought to know that I wasn't in any way responsible and that she needn't blame me. I realized that I had to wake Jane up in some way or other if I was ever going to get rid of that cauliflower person, so I lay back quietly and drew two



He poked and pushed and listened to me and guessed appendicitis.

or three deep breaths on the sly and then yelled! That woman screamed and dropped her book right on the same spot that Jane the Second had selected to kick. I knew where I was then. No nurse could fool me after that. And that's another way I could improve their hospital. I shouldn't allow a single nurse with nervous tendencies on the place.

"Do you know where you are?" she asked me.

"Of course I do," I replied, gasping with pain. "I'm in the Mercy Hospital and it's all I ask for."

"What are you here for?" she continued.

"It was appendicitis, but after that book you can expect complications."

"What's your name?"

This cross-examination was getting monotonous, and it struck me that nurses were an unduly curious lot when the awful thought came to me that it might be for an obituary notice.

"I'm William Q. Smith," I dictated. "Attorney-at-law, office in the Blake building, Residence 1114 Malden Avenue, 'phone number 1072-E. Age, thirty-seven. Affiliations, Odd Fellows and First M. E. Church. And isn't there any hope?"

"You've come to," she decided with a queer look on her face and went out without even stopping to answer my question. How people can be so care-free in the midst of so many beds of pain I'm sure I don't know. And then Jane came in, and she was smiling too.

I felt that she ought to act a little less felicitous at a time like this when I couldn't taste anything but stale ether and she might be a widow any minute. I realized that she little understood the real situation and I choked back two or three sobs before I could speak.

I nearly knocked the front stretcher-bearer's head off with my feet.



"Jane dear," I began, "it's hard after all these years, but—"

"I know, William, but I am so happy—"

"What for?" I demanded.

"Dr. Johnson said that it was the simplest case he'd ever operated on and that you would be out in record time."

"Of course, Jane. I'm glad you're glad," I replied just a little testily, and I couldn't help it "but I guess I know a serious case when I have it myself."

Then a nurse came in and said that Jane would have to go so that I could go to sleep.

In the middle of the night I awoke with a start and realized that I was sinking fast. I pushed the button and told the night nurse to send for Jane and anyone else who ought to be present.

"I'm dying," I explained as composedly as I could. I had heard that they put the new nurses on the night shift and I didn't want unduly to alarm her if she wasn't used to it.

"What of?" she asked, frowning. I judged from her expression that they didn't like to have things like that happening in the night.

I pointed towards the general mass of bedclothes that covered me in the region of my stomach.

"Atrophy," I said accusingly.

"They've left a towel or a jackknife in there." I'd lost one of my first cases years ago when a client tried to get ten thousand dollars damages from a hospital, and I wanted her to understand I wasn't ignorant of their methods. "I am wasting away fast," I warned her. That stirred her up. She rushed out and back again a few times and took my temperature and pulse and then just when she might have been expected to do something, she stopped and calmly read my symptom chart through a couple of times. One hates to tell a lady to hustle, so I delicately tried to indicate my condition by groaning to myself. And she never moved. She read the chart through once or twice more and then asked me if I still felt bad.

"My dear young woman," I said



Every time I tried to get up she pushed me down again.

severely, trying at the same time to control my temper. "if you're trying any New Thought business on me I warn you it wont work. This isn't softening of the brain: it's a towel."

She disappeared again and came back after a while with a tall glass of egg-nog.

"I think,"—looking away—"this egg-nog will arrest disintegration and probably save your life."

And confound it, it did.

THOUGH everybody seemed to be making light of my case, I saw well enough by their actions that I wasn't out of danger by a long shot. I had just got to sleep again when the night nurse woke me up to wash my face and hands and ask me how I felt. A few minutes

later the head of the night shift came along and asked me if I felt better. Then the day nurse came on duty and brought in some flowers that had come to the hospital late the night before with a card wishing me a good-morning from Jane the First and lots of love from Jane the Second. And the day nurse wanted to know how I felt. Then the day head-nurse stuck her head around the edge of the door and asked me if everything was all right. The house surgeon came next and looked at the chart, and then Doc' Johnson came—with the whole crowd lined up behind him. I beckoned him to leave his retinue and approach.

"Tell me the truth, Doc'," I whispered, "and I wont let out a whimper. Am I as bad as those folks think?" Doc' Johnson looked disgusted.

"Smith, I hope your wife and child don't know what a double-dyed fool they've got in their family. I've told you twice that your case was about half as deadly as measles. This bunch"—he jerked his thumb at the row of white coats, caps and aprons standing at attention—"has to parade around the place twice a day to satisfy the board of directors and keep the patients cheerful."

I wasn't going to be put off that way.

"I noticed that they let that English suffragette out of jail to be operated on for appendicitis, and they considered it important enough to cable it to the United Press in this country. I tell you they take life a lot more seriously over there."

"Oh, I don't know; we're pretty fair ourselves here in the United States. Cheer up!"

Doc' Johnson may be the best surgeon in town, but somehow I like one who acts a little more sympathetic. When he went out he left his morning paper for me. I looked through the "Local Happenings" and learned that I was getting along very well and would be out in a few days, my case having been very mild. And right on the same page under "Foreign News" I read:

VICTOR HERBERT
OUT OF DANGER

Victor Herbert, the American composer, who was operated on Saturday for appendicitis, was much better in London yesterday. The doctors are of the opinion that *the crisis has passed.*

Certainly the English show a depth of feeling that we more volatile Americans might do well to emulate.

Jane came every day and read to me and brought me flowers and messages from Jane the Second and told me everything that was happening and how glad she was my case wasn't as bad as hers had been. Doc' Hayden wouldn't let her bring Jane the Second out on the street-cars, because there was so much whooping cough in town. I naturally wanted to see her, and I especially wanted to make her feel that I didn't hold her entirely responsible for my catastrophe—she's such a sensitive little thing. Besides, it would have been a satisfaction to have seen somebody who either hadn't had appendicitis or else wasn't glad to hear that my case had been a simple one.

Even our office-boy, who brought out some papers for me to sign, had had appendicitis "three or four years ago and it wasn't so bad," and instead of acting sympathetic he spent his time telling me about the five serious operations his father had had for something or other,



And she never asked me how I felt!

and about the time his sister had her tonsils cut out and all about his grandfather's present ailments. And I couldn't get a word in edgewise. I've always said that boy wouldn't succeed.

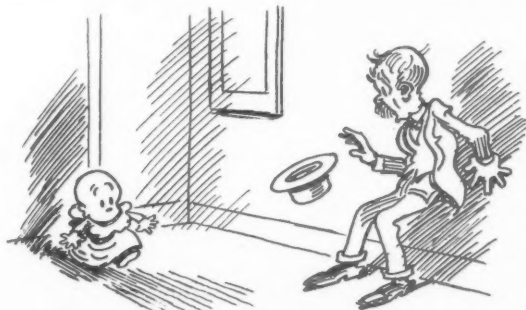
On the day they said I could go home Jane planned to come for me in a taxicab at 4:30. I felt so fine I decided to take her and Jane the Second by surprise by coming home alone. I ordered the taxicab an hour earlier. As the machine turned into our street I saw old Mr. Morrlly, who isn't well enough to do anything except to walk up and down Malden Avenue keeping himself posted on the doings of the street. He always gets on my nerves, but somehow a homecoming wakens unusual sentiments in my breast, so I stuck my head out the window and waved to him. I was in a hurry but when he beckoned to me to stop I ordered the chauffeur to draw up to the curb.

"Welcome home, Mr. Smith," he cackled. "You're a regular member now."

"How's that?" I asked stiffly. Taxicabs always have that effect on me.

"Why, you're the thirty-eighth case on this street in the last sixteen years. I was number one."

Before I could tell the chauffeur to drive on, one of our neighbors, Mrs. Bord-



She came staggering across the room on her own feet.

man, came along dragging her little Geraldine by the wrist.

"Well, Mr. Smith, I see your case wasn't as bad as the papers made out at first," she congratulated me—more and more I find that Jane's first impressions of people are not far wrong. "Now when I had mine taken out, I simply decided that it was a good thing to have done, so after I got rested from the Spring Festival I just got on a car and went down and had it out. People make so much fuss about such things, but as soon as Geraldine is a little older—"

I nodded to the chauffeur.

I was all excited when I reached the house and rang the bell. I could hear Jane hurrying to the door, and Jane the Second was shouting from the dining-room. Jane opened the door.

"William!" She acted almost disappointed.

"Aren't you glad—"

"Why of course, goose,"—she kissed me.—"but I had planned to stop at the Crother's"—they live on the affluent side of Malden Avenue—"to ask Mrs. Crothers to contribute to the Playground Fund,"—Jane's great on playgrounds,— "and a taxicab doesn't cost a bit more for two. It wouldn't have taken five minutes."

And she never asked me how I felt.

I started for the dining-room. I had been thinking of Jane the Second all the way home. It would be sweet to show her how deep and lasting a father's

forgiveness can be. As I entered the room, Mrs. Baldwin, who was still staying with Jane, lifted Jane the Second out of her fence and she came staggering across the room *on her own feet!* In the thrill of father pride I forgot that I was a convalescent and dropped on my knees and held out my hands welcomingly. Instead of flinging herself into them and snuggling like a penitent child against my bosom as I'd supposed she'd do, she stopped short and deliberately

sat down on the floor and stared at me. I was worse than a total stranger; I might just as well have been a posthumous father. She looked me over and decided to get acquainted.

"Ooh! Ooh!" she called, pointing at her mouth.

"She has ten and one coming," announced Mrs. Baldwin proudly.

"T w o," corrected Jane just behind me.

"And you haven't even mentioned her walking," she

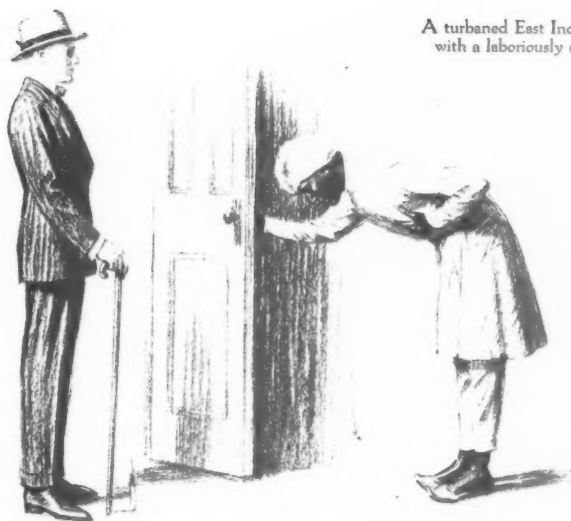
added reproachfully.

Just then the door-bell rang. It was the postman. Punctual on the first quarter, Doc' Johnson presented his bill. I took one good look at it and handed it to Jane.

"I wouldn't pay it," she exclaimed. "It's outrageous for such a case. Why, he said it was the simplest—"

"We'll pay," I decided. I knew the law. "And by heavens it's a satisfaction to find *somebody* who takes my case seriously."





A turbaned East Indian admitted him
with a laboriously acquired salaam.

The Clairvoyant Trust

By Arthur B. Reeve

Author of "Craig Kennedy," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE BREHM

NOW Guy Garrick turns his efforts and his ability in
the new criminal science to the aid of a beautiful girl.

"A

UNT ELIZABETH is failing so rapidly, Mr. Garrick—and sometimes—I—I think she must be going crazy!"

Guy Garrick looked sympathetically at the girl beside his desk. Alma Maynard was the niece of an old and childless couple, the Lyman Maynards, and it was about her aunt that she had called in great distress to see the young detective.

It needed only to hear her speak to enlist Garrick's sympathies, at least. Alma was a young woman of education and refinement, in whose face was a rare

combination of beauty and intelligence—tall, dressed agreeably, a girl at whom one could not help looking.

"Your aunt must be quite advanced in age," Garrick hinted gently.

"I know it," hastened the girl, the tears gathering in her deep azure eyes. "And I cannot expect her to be—with us much longer. But you don't understand. It is not only that. Aunt Elizabeth lately has fallen completely under the domination of this Madame Sears, the medium, and I—I'm afraid it is affecting her mind."

Garrick nodded again sympathetically.

A keen glance at the girl had been enough to show him that to her the vagaries of the occult made as little appeal as they did to the typical normal healthy young American.

Alma drew from her handbag a newspaper clipping and handed it to him. It had been cut from among the advertisements, and read:

MADAME VESTA SEARS

Clairvoyant

Medium

Educated in occult mysteries in Egypt and India. Without asking a question, tells your name, reads your secret troubles and the remedy. Great questions of life quickly solved. Overcomes all evil influences. Failure turned to success. The separated brought together. Advice on all affairs of life, love, marriage, divorce, business, speculation, and investment. Ever ready to help and advise those with capital to find a safe and paying investment. No fee until it succeeds. Could anything be fairer?

THE RETREAT, — W. 45th St.

"Just what is it you fear?" asked Garrick, fingering the clipping. "What do you suspect?"

"Well," she began slowly, "both Uncle Lyman and Aunt Elizabeth have made wills—his estate to go to my cousin, Sanford, and my aunt's to go to me."

She paused, then went on frankly: "I live with them in Stuyvesant Square. I have a little income of my own—enough. I don't want Aunt Elizabeth to die for many, many years. But, Mr. Garrick, this Vesta Sears—oh, I fear her! I hate her!"

"There is no new will, is there?" asked Garrick.

The girl looked at him, alarmed. "Why, no, not as far as I know. I never thought of that. But, Mr. Garrick, there is no telling just how far that woman would dare to go with my aunt."

"You know her—you have seen her?"

"Never!" exclaimed Alma.

"How did your aunt get into her clutches?" inquired Garrick.

"Oh, she was in trouble, the trouble of the rich. Some one had made an offer for a piece of property. Should she sell or not? It might become more valuable and some one might offer more for it. She thought and thought. Uncle Lyman and my cousin Sanford, who is a lawyer,

couldn't tell her. They dealt in the present. She heard of Madame Sears, who dealt in the future. She wasn't a believer, then, but she went to her. And Madame Sears told her that she would go into a trance and consult some of the great financiers who had passed over into the spirit world."

Alma paused.

"I can foresee the result," put in Garrick. "I know that the confidence man, whether operating in gold bricks, wire-tapping or fortune-telling, has one rule. He is never in doubt of the advisability of converting real estate or securities into cash. Cash is transferable. So it was, I suppose, with 'Madame' Sears."

"Exactly. The spirits said it was best to sell."

"In cases of the kind," observed Garrick, as she stopped again, "where to do a thing or not is the question, there is one chance of being right and one of being wrong. It is an even guess. What did your aunt do?"

"She did not take the advice," answered Alma. "Soon, she found she was wrong. It was her error—not in judgment, but in not taking the advice of Madame Sears. Her belief became stronger. Now, I don't believe there is anything Madame Sears could tell her that she wouldn't do."

"I shall take a look at this Madame Sears," remarked Garrick, handing back the clipping. "Meanwhile, my dear Miss Maynard, don't alarm yourself. Everything will turn out all right in the end, I am sure."

"I hope so," she murmured gratefully, extending her little hand to him. "Thank you, and depend on me to help you, if you need me."

THE appealing pressure of Alma Maynard's soft hand still clung to Garrick as, a few minutes later, he left his office and hurried uptown to look over the temple of the occult so alluringly advertised as "The Retreat."

It was an old-fashioned, high-stooped, brownstone house, of a generation ago, just far enough from Fifth Avenue not to be fashionable and near enough to be ultra-respectable.

Garrick walked past, taking in the

Alma was a young woman of education and refinement, in whose face was a rare combination of beauty and intelligence; tall, dressed agreeably—a girl at whom one could not help looking.



house with a quick glance. It was flanked by two others in the row which bore the unmistakable signs of being boarding houses of the better class.

He turned at the corner and, after a pause, went back and mounted the steps. As he did so, he had a sort of sensation that he was being watched from behind the drawn shades. He rang the bell, however, and a moment later a turbaned East Indian, who looked suspiciously like a mulatto from the San Juan Hill district of negro homes not a score of blocks away, admitted him with a laboriously acquired salaam.

It was a large reception room into which Garrick was admitted. The esoteric apartment was exquisitely fitted. Shades were drawn and a lamp burned dimly on the table, a suggestive lamp whose standard was a pair of twisted serpents. The carpets were soft and of deep green; the draperies were cleverly covered by cabalistic signs. The air itself seemed to breathe a pungent yet restful odor.

Garrick entered with an assumed hesitation and embarrassment. There was nobody in the reception room; it must have been an off-day, for he had already noticed the splotches of oil on the pavement at the curb which told of a string of automobiles which must pull up before the door and wait.

The dusky, turbaned attendant immediately put him at his ease, however, and he gazed about curiously. There was no bustle, no hurry, no time, here.

"Will you wait a few minutes?" asked the attendant. "Madame has a client, but will see you soon."

Garrick acquiesced. It was an old game of the mediums, to keep a client waiting until the dreamy atmosphere of the place had its effect. He waited not one minute, or ten, but half an hour. Still, he was not to be taken in by such an old trick. He kept alert.

A couple of clients or prospective clients came in, middle-aged ladies. Garrick watched them furtively until he decided that aside from showing the character of Madame's patrons they were of no importance to him.

"Will you write your name and the questions you wish to ask on this slip of

paper?" asked the attendant at length. "It will help you to concentrate."

He had been expecting it and had already framed the story he was to tell.

"I want to know," he wrote, "how to invest some money that has just come to me by my father's death."

"Now, fold up the paper," directed the attendant, who had remained ostentatiously at the further end of the room so that he could not possibly see what was being written, "and keep it."

Garrick tore off the sheet from the pad and the servant took the pad.

It was an old trick. The second sheet had been treated so that when dusted over with a certain powder, the powder brought up on it the writing done with the hard pencil on the first sheet, which Garrick had retained and stowed away safely in his pocket.

Another wait followed, during which Garrick knew some one was at work "reading his mind" by means of the doctored pad.

A movement in the inner room told him that some one, perhaps another client, was leaving. He could not see who it was, and this was no time to arouse suspicion by any attempt to find out.

Fortunately, the draught from the open hall door as the attendant opened the street door swung aside the heavy portieres for a moment, and Garrick caught a fleeting glimpse of a face which he stamped indelibly on his memory for future reference.

It was of a man, debonair, dashing, dressed in the height of fashion—a rather florid face, scarcely prepossessing. Just for a moment Garrick saw it, without himself being seen; then the turbaned attendant let the man out, with a bow just a trifle more deferential than usual.

Garrick waited until at last the folding doors at the far end of the reception room opened, and the mystic herself appeared, unannounced.

She advanced a step, then paused.

Garrick rose, and instinctively fell in with her mood, which was evidently that he should go to her, not she to him.

He moved forward, and she received him graciously, a striking picture silhouetted against the mysterious back-

ground which the open door half revealed, half concealed.

Vesta Sears was a woman of good poise, with a remarkably good figure and, when she spoke, a charming trace of foreign accent.

As she led Garrick along, the ubiquitous attendant silently closed the doors. The folds of her clinging, filmy, purplish house dress were like a fleecy cloud, bearing her up, as she seemed to glide, rather than to walk, into the room.

A diamond sparkled at her throat and a ring encircled her finger, but for the most part there was about her a rich simplicity that spoke of good taste.

Garrick watched her closely. Most striking, to him, were her dark hair and her dark, magnetic eyes—eyes that, no doubt, accounted for a good deal of her success in the profession she seemed to ply so naturally.

The inner room, into which they now entered, was a marvel of skill. In it there was the same curious aroma which was noticeable outside, only deeper. The lights were dimmer, the carpets and hangings darker, and there were plenty of easy chairs and divans, inviting repose and abandon of the outside twentieth century world.

In the center of the room stood a little table of ebony over which was draped a dark velvet cover, and on the center of the table Garrick noticed a solid globe of crystal, nearly a foot in diameter, set in a black-velvet-lined box. It rested on a blackened sandalwood base, and the odor of sandalwood was heavy in the room.

Scarcely a word passed between them. It was as if she wished to convey the impression that it was not necessary, that to her his mind was an open book. Garrick could not but be impressed by the artistry of the woman, charlatan though he suspected her to be.

He sank back into the cushions of the chair which she indicated with a graceful wave of her perfectly formed forearm, while she leaned forward in rapt attention over the globe, resting her oval chin on her interlocked fingers.

For perhaps five minutes the adept gazed fixedly into the mysterious depths of the crystal.

It was only by the utmost effort of the will that Garrick could resist falling under the spell that was so cleverly woven about him.

At last she spoke, in soft, low, purring tones.

"I see you engaged in a transaction that will bring you great wealth," she murmured slowly, as if some unseen force, not herself, were impelling the words from her lips.

"I see you standing before a great door in a large white building in a big city.

"You go in. You ride up in the elevator. You enter the office of—yes—I can read the name on the door. It is the—the Mont Tresor Gold Mining Company.

"I see you talking with a man. You buy from him, as he sits before a great mahogany desk—something—there is on it the figure, and written also—one thousand—one thousand shares. I hear the man tell you they are twenty-five cents a share, and I see you pay him two hundred and fifty dollars."

Her voice faltered, then drowsed away. She reached over languidly and took a chocolate mechanically from a box on the table.

"It is a month later," she resumed, measuring her words as if each were freighted with fortune. "I can see that by the calendar that is hanging on the wall. Ah, I can see you enter the door again. You seem to have your stock certificates with you. The man, the same man I saw before, greets you.

"You hand him the stock and tell him you wish him to sell it. He says that he can arrange it and will sell it at the market price of seventy-five cents. Your stock has gone up two hundred per cent in a month. You have made a five-hundred-dollar gain on a two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar investment."

Her voice ceased; she seemed to lapse again; then she trembled just a bit, drew herself up with a start, and apparently had no remembrance of what had just passed.

Garrick leaned forward eagerly.

"Where is this?" he almost begged. "Where can I find it? Direct me where you have seen me go."

"I don't know," she answered. "I shall have to go into another trance to follow you. It will mean a double fee. Somehow or other something seems to be working against me to-day."

"Try," urged Garrick, placing the money on a book.

Again Vesta leaned forward over the crystal.

"I see you walking down a street," she cried at length. "It is very crowded. Men almost run into you. Messenger boys dodge about you. Ah—there is the tall spire of a church at the end of it. It—it is Wall Street. High office buildings are all about but you do not stop—yes, you pause—one moment—I must read the name carved in the lintel of the huge granite doorway. It—it is the Wall Street Tower. Again I see you. The name of the man—is—Tanner—yes, that is it, Stuart Tanner—Turner—no that is right—Tanner."

The minutes sped by as they chatted after the crystal-gazing. Madame Sears seemed never to be in a hurry. Outside, clients were absorbing the exotic atmosphere. Yet she did not let the time overrun itself. Without knowing just how it happened, Garrick found himself departing by another doorway, promising glibly to return soon. Smoothly the turbaned attendant salaamed him out.

HALF an hour later Garrick fulfilled the mystic's prophecy by actually standing inside the door of the big white tower building which she had described.

He was looking over the *M's* on the directory. As his eye ran down the list it rested for a moment on the name,

Maynard, S., Lawyer, 1026.

On down through the *M's* his eye traveled until at last he came to the name he was seeking:

Mont Tresor Gold Mining Co., 1575.

Garrick moved a step or two and pursued his quest. Among the *T's* he came upon the name he was seeking:

Tanner, S., 1575.

As he contemplated the name, he won-

dered whether it was a preconceived arrangement, this between Madame Sears and Tanner. He was determined to investigate.

As he opened the gilt-lettered door on the fifteenth floor, he could scarcely suppress an exclamation. There, standing before a large desk, was the dapper, debonaire man whom he had seen for just a moment scarcely an hour before at The Retreat.

As the man glanced around, Garrick paused. "I came, recommended by Madame Vesta Sears," introduced Garrick.

"Oh—yes," greeted Tanner cordially. "Have a chair."

A moment later, Tanner, a born salesman, had Garrick listening attentively as he poured forth the merits of Mont Tresor Gold. Alluring, always, are tales of rich yellow metal lying in the hills awaiting only the upturning of the pick—of other ores, baser, but valuable also.

"Have you any big stockholders—prominent people?" fenced Garrick.

"Oh, yes," urged Tanner. "There is a Mrs. Maynard, Mrs. Lyman Maynard, you know. She owns thousands of shares. I guess if it's good enough for the Maynards, it's good enough for anyone."

Garrick said nothing. He already had reams of literature printed in the prismatic colors, charts, figures, government reports showing the assay of various ores, net dividends at the smelters, and the payments for bullion at the mint, a mass quite as cabalistic as the signs on the walls of The Retreat, statistics all calculated to inspire hope.

He rose to go, but Tanner followed him to the door, bent on making a sale if possible. Garrick deftly put him off. He was convinced—but he would have to realize cash on his property before he could invest, and that would take a few days.

He turned down the hall, after noticing that the door of the office next to the mining company was blank, bearing no name.

"So far, at least," smiled Garrick to himself, "Madame's prophecy is fulfilled, though the thousand share part is—about like the two hundred per cent profit."

The last local stop of the express elevator was at the tenth floor, and Garrick suddenly decided to get off and call on Sanford Maynard.

Maynard was a lawyer, and by the same token typical of many of the profession: cold, passionless, at least on the surface. He did not appear to have much practice beyond that involved in managing his own affairs, for it was only a small, though well-equipped, office, which he occupied.

Garrick took the bull by the horns and introduced himself frankly as a recent acquaintance of Miss Maynard's

"Yes. She was wondering whether if her aunt made a new will it would be likely to stand in the courts."

Sanford cleared his throat. "Mrs. Maynard," he said slowly, "has consulted me about transactions frequently—but not lately. I'm just as well pleased. She doesn't take advice any more—from me."

"Why is that?" asked Garrick pointedly.

Maynard looked at him a moment as though in doubt whether to damn him for his insolence or answer him. Having gone so far, he evidently concluded



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who had been calling in the building, and seeing the name on the door, had taken the liberty of dropping in.

At the mention of his cousin's name, Sanford had shot a quizzical glance at Garrick, much as if wondering whether this young man might have designs on the Maynard family.

They chatted for a few minutes guardedly, as Garrick led gradually around to the topic he had in mind.

"Your cousin put a hypothetical question to me the other day," at last remarked Garrick.

"A hypothetical question?" repeated Sanford.

to answer. "Why, as a matter of fact," he replied, "I have almost come to the conclusion that she is incompetent to make a new will. I suppose my cousin told you she has changed greatly lately. She has, and it worries us all. I have thought about it a great deal. And yet I don't think it would be advisable to apply to the courts for a commission to take charge of her affairs—not yet, at least. Personally, I hate scandal. You may be sure I shall never take the initiative. I think too much of the Maynard name for that. We Maynards must stick together though, stick together."

The lawyer changed the subject, a

hint that he did not care to discuss family matters, even with a friend of his cousin, and Garrick accepted the hint. At any rate he had met Sanford and thought he had gained an insight into Mrs. Maynard's actions if not into her mind. He excused himself and this time actually started uptown again.

The Retreat was in a neighborhood where more than ordinarily prosperous boarding houses were springing up, as Garrick had already noticed, and since his visit downtown a plan had been slowly forming in the young detective's mind.

Late that afternoon Garrick rang the bell of the house next door to The Retreat. To his satisfaction, in answer to his inquiry, he found that there was a large back parlor on the first floor for rent. It was a great, wide room, the width of the house and corresponding to the inner room of Vesta Sears next door. He lost no time in renting and occupying it.

IT did not take Garrick long to move in. A trip down to his office, the gathering together of some rather bulky material and its delivery were all that were necessary.

Quietly, noiselessly as he could, that night, Garrick worked. He had set himself the curious task of boring a minute hole right through the solid wall, until there was just a faint point of light on the other side, telling that Vesta apparently never allowed the dim light in her mystic room to be wholly extinguished.

Carefully he shoved a narrow tube, perhaps a foot long, through the opening in the wall. It was only three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and in the dim light of Vesta's sanctum would pass unnoticed.

He bent down and placed his eye at the end of the tube, adjusting it. What had before been merely a dim point of light, now became a panorama of the whole room next door.

Garrick rose and regarded his work with satisfaction.

It was a detectoscope, in one end of which was what is known as a fish-eye lens. The focus could be altered in range so that even faces of those in the room might be recognized. The instrument was

fashioned somewhat after the cytoscope of the medical world, with which the human interior may be seen.

By using the fish-eye lens, not only could he see straight in front but on every side as well, the range of its vision being one hundred and eighty degrees, or half a circle. In a way, it illustrated the range of vision of some fishes, whose eyes see over half a circle. Ordinary lenses, because of their flatness, have a range of only a few degrees, the widest in use taking in only something like ninety-six degrees, or a little over a quarter of a circle. Garrick's detectoscope enabled him to see anything that happened in the room next door.

He waited only long enough the next morning to determine just how well the detectoscope worked; then after finding that it showed just what he wanted, he attached to the other end of it a large box-like arrangement.

From time to time Garrick watched through his new eavesdropping eye, but as nothing occurred, he began to think of Alma Maynard and to develop his plan of action.

She had told him that she lived with the Lyman Maynards on one of the squares further downtown which the uptown trend of business had left like a little residential eddy in the stream.

He had no difficulty in finding the house, a wide stone mansion built after the style of a generation ago. Inquiry for Alma Maynard brought the information that she would see him in a minute, and he was ushered into a study.

As he was waiting, he suddenly became aware that some one had entered the next room. By the voices he recognized that it must be Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Maynard, and through the open door he could see them, though they were evidently not aware that he was in the study waiting for Alma.

Lyman Maynard was a tall, thin, angular man, with a shock of silvery white hair; his wife a slight, nervous woman.

They were talking in low tones, and at first Garrick could not make out just what it was about, though from the earnestness with which the man spoke it was evident that Mr. Maynard was trying to smooth over some estrangement.

"Very well, Elizabeth," the man said at length, "you know Alma much better than I do. It has only been my purpose to look after her interests—the interests of both of them, and the future of the Maynard name and fortune."

Mrs. Maynard's reply was lost, although Garrick did manage to distinguish the name "Sanford."

It was not difficult to deduce that it was the dearest wish of the old man's heart to unite the fortunes in the marriage of Sanford and Alma.

Garrick wondered why Alma had said nothing about it. Had she her own ideas on the subject? He could scarcely blame her. The cold, calculating character of Sanford seemed anything but congenial to this warm-blooded, very human girl.

A sound at the door aroused him from his speculations. Mrs. Maynard had entered the study. At first she did not see him, and he noted quickly the abstracted, far-away expression in her eyes.

Garrick rose and introduced himself. She did not appear to be startled. In fact, she seemed to be in state of serene calm, as though contemplating something far off.

He said merely that he was waiting to see Alma, and was casting about for something to talk about which would not tend to arouse suspicion, when the appearance of Miss Maynard herself relieved him of the necessity.

Her aunt seemed visibly to brighten as the girl linked an arm about her. A few gentle words passed between them, and Mrs. Maynard started reluctantly from the room, paused, returned and stroked the fair hair of her niece lovingly.

"Some day, Alma," she whispered in a low tone, "some day, when I am gone, I shall come back to see you the richest, the most sought-after lady in the land."

Then with a parting caress from Alma, she turned and left the room.

Garrick had been an interested but silent spectator of the little tableau, wondering what sidelight it threw on the case.

"Poor Aunt Elizabeth," Alma murmured as the door closed. "What do you think of her?"

"A very charming old lady," returned Garrick frankly. "—so simple and unaffected."

"Too much so," returned Alma quickly. "She is always thinking and planning for my future—instead of for her own present. And Uncle Lyman is the same way."

She paused and gazed out of the window pensively, as though not disposed to bare her inmost soul except for this glimpse.

"I have seen that Madame Sears," remarked Garrick in a low tone, not so much to change the subject as to lead it along.

Instantly her face changed.

"Oh," she cried, "if my aunt would only stop thinking about my own fortune and let it take care of itself without any help from that woman, how happy we might all be. I almost know that that charlatan is playing on her in some way, through her love for me." She shuddered.

Garrick's thoughts traveled from the mystic to the little office in Wall Street and Tanner's boastful statement that if Mont Tresor Gold was good enough for the Maynards it was good enough for anybody. Was that the explanation? Were the fakers playing on the old lady's love and solicitude for the future of Alma?

"I want you to go to Madame Sears yourself," remarked Garrick.

"I?" she gasped. "Why, I could never—"

"But you must try," he urged. "Remember, you told me to call on you if I needed you, and I do need you, to get at the truth."

"She would know me, even though I never went to her."

"Never mind. I expect her to know you. I want you to tell her that you are in love."

Alma looked at him a moment, startled.

"Say you are in love with a young man," added Garrick hastily. "who is handsome, athletic—red-blooded—anything—you know the type I mean."

"Oh, you mean it is just a story," she replied, much relieved.

"Yes, as we detectives say, a 'plant.'"

There was no mistaking her manner; the girl showed plainly that she did not take kindly to Lyman Maynard's plan for her future.

"Very well," she agreed, as Garrick excused himself. "I shall go to her and do as you say."

"Good," he encouraged. "You are a trump."

The rest of the morning, he occupied in hiring temporarily the vacant office he had observed next to the Mont Tresor Gold Mining Company. There, also, through the office wall, although it was much more difficult, he bored a hole and inserted another detectascope, with a large box at the end of it, precisely similar to that which he had placed in the room next to The Retreat.

Garrick divided his time during the rest of the day between the two places, taking care not to be observed going in and out.

That evening, when sufficient time had passed for Alma to make her visit, Garrick paid a second call on Madame Sears.

She greeted him much more cordially this time. Evidently Tanner had already told her of his prompt visit, although her first question was, "Have you done what I saw you doing in the crystal?"

"Yes," he replied eagerly. "And it is wonderful, marvelous. I'm going to buy the stock just as soon as I can get the cash. But it is about another matter I have called on you, this time."

He paused, to let her know how great was his confidence in her, then resumed, slowly, "I'm lonely."

"You are in love, then?" she queried, searching his face intently, as she led the way into the inner room.

"Hardly," laughed Garrick. "That is the trouble. I've never met the kind of girl I'd like to meet."

"What must she be like?" asked the medium.

"Oh—pretty—intellectual, tall, well dressed," he enumerated, adding, "and I like deep blue eyes."

Madame Sears gazed long and deeply into the crystal.

"I see the young lady whom you would love," she began at length in a soft voice. "She would love you, too. I see a love affair surrounding both of you."

She continued to gaze into the limpid depths from which she drew her inspiration. "But not yet will she be yours," she went on. "She is under the evil influence of another man—"

Garrick waited anxiously. What would she say?

"An old man," added the medium. "But it can all be arranged with care. For fifty dollars I will go into a trance. I will overcome this evil influence. But it will take time. She is precisely such a girl as you describe."

Garrick suppressed a smile. It was his own client!

Much as he admired Alma Maynard, he would scarcely have conducted a courtship through a professional "server" or crystal gazer. He thanked her profusely and promised to return and let her use her wonderful power in overcoming the evil influence—which he could guess was that of old Mr. Maynard.

He had expected to find Miss Maynard angry at Madame Sears, but when he called on Alma again the next day, she was merely amused.

"She already had an affinity picked out for me," laughed Alma merrily in telling about it. "I met him there."

"Indeed?" remarked Garrick, at first with mingled feelings, for although he was not a suitor, still he was human enough not to want to be laughed at as such. Her last remark aroused his curiosity. "Who was he?" he asked.

"A Mr. Tanner," she replied. "Have you met him? He is a broker or something or other downtown. Aunt Elizabeth knows him."

Garrick nodded. He was trying to piece the mystery together and found that somehow the parts did not fit into each other yet.

THE day slipped by, like others an anxious day for Alma. Her visit to Madame Sears had not reassured her concerning her aunt. Instead, it had further alarmed her, for she did not like the looks of the Mr. Tanner.

Garrick had apparently disappeared, although he was in fact busy with his detectascope both at the boarding house and in the office he had hired downtown.

He had arranged his quarters at the boarding house to look as much as possible like a seance room of a fortune-teller and had prepared to place in the front window a little gilt-lettered glass sign, reading, "Prof. Bell, Psychic Palmist."

It was along toward night when he found at last that he was ready to act, and he lost no time in calling up Alma Maynard.

"I've established myself as a psychic at — West Forty-fifth Street," he observed over the telephone.

"What?" she answered quickly. "Next to Madame Sears?"

"Yes," he laughed back. "An opposition. You will find me there to-night as 'Professor Bell, Psychic Palmist.' I wonder if you and Sanford couldn't arrange to call on me? I shall have to trust to you to think up the excuse."

It proved easier than she had expected when she told Garrick that she would try, for, by a sort of inspiration, she managed to appeal to Sanford's skepticism by asking him to see if he could expose this new psychic of whom she had just heard.

Alma greeted the "Professor" in a manner which showed that she had the instincts of an actress. Sanford, on the other hand, as soon as he caught sight of Garrick and recognized him, turned uperciliously to his cousin and remarked, "I thought you didn't believe in this sort of thing, Alma."

"Oh," she replied, "that's just it. I don't. But—this is so different."

Garrick flashed his approbation at the impromptu remark and busied himself about a cabinet on top of which was a huge crystal ball. Beneath, in the cabinet itself, he had placed a curious arrangement, which, however, was not visible to an outsider.

He lowered the lights in the room, talking in an even, unhurried tone as he did so.

Sanford watched him furtively, casting a glance now and then at Alma. Garrick saw it, though he did not appear to be watching. He felt instinctively that if Sanford really had been in love with his pretty cousin there would have been excellent material for a fight.

"Suppose we cut out the mummery, and get down to business," remarked Sanford at length, twisting impatiently in his chair.

"Look!" exclaimed Garrick, suddenly, ignoring the remark.

His tone startled them, but no more than what he directed their attention toward. There, in the depths of the magic crystal ball, broke forth a dim, shimmering light, becoming brighter and brighter, making the huge crystal seem almost a thing of life.

They started forward involuntarily and gazed down, as Garrick directed. Alma gave a faint scream of surprise. Suddenly a picture, faint, indistinct, seemed to form in the very heart of the transparent rock. She bent closer, scarcely breathing.

There floated in the crystal a figure—it was no other than Madame Sears herself. It was indistinct, yet plain enough for them to recognize what was going on. She advanced toward them, but really toward what was evidently a door.

A man entered the room with her. There they stood, close together, apparently talking earnestly.

There was something familiar about him, yet he did not turn his face and without seeing his face the picture was too indistinct to recognize him. Still, even his back seemed indefinably familiar to Alma as she strained her eyes to see.

The couple talked, and it was evident that they were on very good terms indeed. Now and then the medium would gaze up into his face, with that same rapt attention which she bestowed upon the crystal. But the man was not of crystal. Suddenly he bent over and kissed her. She flung her arms about him in a wild embrace...

The light suddenly disappeared from the crystal. Alma could not help feeling that somehow Garrick had cut the picture short himself. What did it mean? What sort of new scientific necromancy was this? What sort of situation was it disclosing?

It was weird, as Garrick had staged it. Both his visitors could see, not merely Garrick himself, the alleged scryer, but all of them. For the first time Sanford seemed impressed.

"I have always thought the visions of the crystal gazer perhaps real enough," he muttered, "but I thought it was merely seeing ideas visualized which were already in the mind. The least you can say of this is that it is telepathy—or—fraud."

Before Alma could say a word, Garrick had flashed the lights of his seance room up and had drawn a legal paper from his pocket. Quickly he skimmed over its contents:

Said Madame Vesta Sears received from deponent the sum of twenty-five dollars, then stated that she saw a love affair surrounding deponent; that there was a young lady who would love deponent but was undecided because of the evil influence of another man, an old man; that for fifty dollars she would go into a trance and cause this young lady to fall in love with deponent by the aid of metaphysics. Wherefore deponent prays that legal process may be issued for the apprehension of said Madame Vesta Sears, and that she be dealt with according to law.

As he finished reading, Garrick had taken a step toward the door. From nowhere, seemed to spring two plain clothes men. In the glare of the light, Garrick and his visitors could see that one of them was holding Stuart Tanner securely by the wrist.

Not a word was said, as Garrick ran off his little drama: Tanner himself gazed sullenly from one to the other.

"Wh-what does it all mean?" cried Alma.

Garrick merely pressed a warrant into the hand of the other officer whom he had had waiting outside, and a moment later the man had mounted the steps next door, had forced himself past the turbaned attendant and into Madame Sears' holy of holies.

Outside on the street, quicker than it can be told, a crowd had collected, a



For the first time Sanford seemed impressed.

typical New York crowd, attracted now by cries of "A raid! A raid!"

Garrick had evidently laid his plans carefully to end the whole affair like the crack of a whip. Everything was running as smoothly as if it had been a picture in one of the magic crystals.

A moment later, the raider appeared from the next house with Madame Sears herself, indignant and protesting.

As she was hurried into the rooms of the new rival, "Prof. Bell," she shot

a glance of scorn at Garrick. Then with a little cry of surprise she caught sight of Sanford and Alma and Tanner.

Before she could recover, Garrick stepped forward.

"There's a syndicate of you fakers," he cried, "working in this city. But you, Madame Sears," he added, "you supply only one link in the chain I have forged."

He walked over and laid his hand on the crystal ball.

"Here," he went on, "here, I have the evidence."

With a turn of his hand he switched off the lights so that the room was in almost total darkness.

Again a light seemed to break through the crystal on the cabinet and the picture seemed to begin where it had left off before he had interrupted it by the raid.

As all crowded around, they could see the medium and her visitor, whose face was concealed, holding each other in a long, passionate embrace.

It was just for a moment; then the wonderful crystal became suddenly black and blank as before.

"It's a fake—it's a lie," cried a woman's voice, tensely. All turned. It was Vesta Sears, facing Garrick.

Quickly he lifted up the heavy crystal ball. There, beneath, set into the cabinet itself, was a peculiar lens. He opened the cabinet and disclosed a miniature moving-picture machine which projected a small picture right through the crystal itself.

Then, without a word, Garrick took a step toward the party wall that separated them from The Retreat. He bent over and drew out the little twelve-inch tube that he had inserted.

"Look through that," he demanded, handing it to Vesta Sears.

"What is it?" asked Alma, leaning over and touching his arm.

"A detectascope," he said quietly. "I have seen much through it, but modern science tells us not to trust our eyes too far, as witnesses. I determined to make certain that what I saw could not be denied. I have used the detectascope to take moving pictures with a new form of

motion-picture camera. In this other machine, I have shown you one of the pictures which I took. Here is another—taken in another place where I repeated what I did here."

Garrick replaced the crystal in its position over the projecting lens; the lights winked down; and suddenly at the inconspicuous pressure of his finger the light broke forth in the crystal depths again.

The scene had shifted. All now crowded about the cabinet, gazing down entranced.

There was Tanner's office, downtown. There sat Tanner himself at his desk.

Suddenly a man entered. It was the figure already familiar which had appeared in the crystal before.

On sped the picture.

They were evidently engaged in going over something, together, for at the conclusion of the transaction, Tanner rose, went to a safe, and handed over to the man a huge roll of bills.

"Some one," exclaimed Garrick, breaking the tense silence, "some one was planning to squeeze the last cent from Mrs. Maynard. This represents the last payment she has made for worthless stock in the Mont Tresor Mine."

Suddenly the man in the crystal turned his face toward the little audience, and it was clear.

Alma drew back with a scream.

"Sanford!" exclaimed she.

At the same time Garrick caught an upraised hand. Sanford Maynard had advanced with a heavy metal ornament which he had seized from the mantelpiece as if to smash the crystal.

"More than that," ground out the young detective, "that person, so cold to outward appearances, had one great all-consuming passion. The last cent wrung from Mrs. Maynard, he planned to marry off Alma Maynard as best he could, while he gratified his infatuation for Vesta Sears. In the scheme of fleecing the old lady, Stuart Tanner was only the tool of others. Vesta Sears was not alone. This scientific scryer proves it. You—Sanford Maynard—you were the very brains of this clairvoyant trust!"

The Water Level

By Richard Barker Shelton

"WATER seeks its own level—" says the old adage. And, like many of these old sayings, it causes a lot of heartache.

THE little gate in the dividing fence was very narrow. Isaiah Phinney found it necessary to turn sidewise and to do no little twisting and squirming to work his big bulk through it. Once he had engineered the difficult passage, he stood for a moment listening with his head cocked to one side, until he caught the rattle and clank of a hay-rake in a distant field. Then, with a slow nodding of his head, as if the sound of that hay-rake had settled some doubtful point in his mind, he moved heavily across the little garden with its rows of mignonette and candy-tuft, towards the big white house of his next-door neighbor.

Isaiah, for all his girth, was a sorry pessimist. He saw the world through the bluest of blue goggles. Suspicion was ever uppermost in his mind. You had to show Isaiah thoroughly before he believed in you, and even then he always acted as if you hadn't been perfectly frank with him—as if you had put your best side forward to blind his judgment, while you carefully kept your real and baser self under cover. Isaiah, in short, was one of those men who go about looking for trouble, and, when they do not find it according to their anticipations, proceed to make it to order.

Like most pessimistic men, Isaiah was dolefully and long-windedly platitudinous. He prided himself with his ability to size up the general run of mankind, to mark its many failings, and to hit the nail on the head with one of his ancient and time-worn adages. He had an irritating way of chuckling gleefully at such times, which, somehow, made his cheap platitudes all the more offensive.

As he strode across the garden now, he was chuckling to himself, for he had thought up a beautiful platitude to suit the occasion in hand. Isaiah's proudest boast was that no one could pull the wool over his eyes.

He rounded the corner of the house and beheld Harrison Fay seated comfortably on the back porch, his gnarled old hands nursing one luxuriously upraised knee, while he pulled placidly at a very black clay pipe between his teeth.

Isaiah waddled up, and planked himself down on the edge of the porch, while the weatherbeaten boards groaned beneath his weight.

"Say, looker here, Harrison," said he. "I guess you dunno much about Jim Wasson, or else you wouldn't have him workin' here for ye. When I fired him, t'other day, I done so, Harrison, because," Isaiah paused and looked around impressively to assure himself that no one was within earshot—"he aint honest," he finished.

Harrison Fay puffed away at the pipe with only a sidelong glance at his portly neighbor. He was well aware that he would not have to press Isaiah for all the horrible details.

"Why," Isaiah rattled on, "he was a-sellin' onions off'n the lower piece unbeknownst to me—pullin' of 'em up by the bushel and a-sellin' of 'em to Ben Twombly's boy, that runs the vegetable cart into town, mornin's. I cal'late he got away with suthin' like eighteen bushels or so before I got onto it. I supposed you'd know I fired him for some good reason. I was surprised enough when I seen him workin' over here for you."

"Well, I was sorter pushed for help

just now," said Harrison slowly. "He come here and said he was done over to your place and was lookin' for a job, so I took him on. 'Pears like a good enough worker to me."

Isaiah sniffed. The short-sightedness of some people was quite beyond his understanding.

"He's a fair enough worker," he admitted grudgingly. "But like I'm tellin' of ye, he aint honest. You'll have to watch him, Harrison. 'Once a thief,' ye know—"

Harrison tamped the tobacco in his pipe with a calloused forefinger.

"Oh, I dunno as that allus holds good," he said meditatively.

"I do," snapped Isaiah. "I wouldn't have that feller round."

"So I see," said the other.

"Specially if I was you," said Isaiah meaningly, with a certain gloating look in his eyes, now that he approached the real matter that had brought him over.

"What do you mean by that, Isaiah?" Harrison asked quickly.

Isaiah grinned. There was malice and pity in that grin. He looked at Harrison with a certain pitying contempt.

"If I had a girl like Beth round, I guess I shouldn't be quite so blind as you be," said he.

Harrison suddenly straightened out the knee he had been nursing and turned to the man beside him.

"What you drivin' at?" said he rather sharply.

"This Wasson aint a bad looking young feller," said Isaiah. "He's a pretty smooth talker, too. He's one of the kind the women looks at twice. I've got an idee Beth aint so terrible down on him as she might be."

Harrison Fay's face hardened. He leaned towards Isaiah with such a fierce look that the latter involuntarily drew back a bit.

"What makes you think that?" Harrison demanded crisply.

"Don't go to goin' off at half-cock," Isaiah advised. "Did ye ever know me to make up yarns outa whole cloth? I don't go sayin' things till I have proof. I seen her over there to my place a number of times, hangin' round him when he was workin' for me. Once partickerler, I re-

member, when he was plantin' the lower piece of corn, she sut there on the stone wall talkin' to him, and I come along and she seemed pretty confused and she got off the wall and come over home across lots; and another time—I'd been over to Randall and got home sooner'n what I expected to—she was out in the barn with him while he was milkin'."

Harrison Fay said nothing, but hard lines appeared about the corners of his mouth.

"They was other times, too, I seen 'em together while he was workin' for me," Isaiah went on. "All in all, she was over there quite a lot. I want to know if this is the first you've ever suspicioned anything like that?" he ended virtuously.

Still Harrison Fay made no answer. He had picked up a stick and was idly drawing geometrical designs in the dust at his feet.

"'Water allus seeks its own level,' Harrison," said Isaiah, quoting the particularly fitting platitude that had so pleased him as he had come across the garden. "I allus thought you and Abby was runnin' considerable many chances when you took her out o' the Home at Randall. You know well enough who her folks was—they shiftless Brookses over to Whitmore. What could you expect else, Harrison? I tell ye, 'water seeks its own level'—allus."

Slowly Harrison lifted his eyes from the geometrical designs he was tracing with the stick. There was an expression of pain in them—a frightened look, as well. But his lips were drawn straighter than ever.

"We brought her up, Abby and me," said he quietly, "as if she was our own daughter. She aint never knowed but what she *was* our own child, so fur as I know. I'm her dad to her, and Abby was her own mother to all intents and purposes. I don't believe her own mother could 'a' thought any more of her than Abby did till she died. Maybe what you say's right, Isaiah, but I aint goin' to believe it wholly till I see things with my own eyes."

"All you gotta do is keep yer eyes open," said Isaiah with a sneer on his fat face. "I aint the only one that's noticed it. Marthy, now—"

Harrison groaned. If Martha Phinney had seen anything, it had been gossiped all over town before this. Martha never let any grass grow under her feet when there was so choice a morsel of news to scatter broadcast.

Isaiah got up from his seat on the porch.

"I wanted ye to know about him—and about her, too," said he virtuously. "I thought ye'd oughta know. I allus do my duty as I see it, no matter how disagreeable it is."

He waddled across the garden again and squeezed himself puffingly through the inadequate aperture in the dividing fence. He could hear Beth Fay's voice singing blithely as she busied herself with the breakfast dishes at the kitchen sink.

"The shameless hussy!" said Isaiah to himself as he made for his own back steps. "Water seeks its own level—invariably!"

Harrison Fay on the back porch went on with his geometrical designs long after Isaiah Phinney was gone. He sat there drawing them with the end of the stick and scowling at them darkly. He couldn't believe it of the girl singing away at the kitchen sink—he wouldn't believe it, despite all Isaiah's croakings. But, despite that sturdy resolution, little disquieting things began to flit through his mind.

He remembered that it was Beth herself that had suggested that this Jim Wasson be hired when Isaiah had suddenly seen fit to get through with his services. He remembered that Beth only last evening had been talking with Jim in the kitchen while he read in the front room; he remembered, too, that Beth had flitted much across the lower field this spring and summer, and that Jim Wasson had been busy most of the time he was at Isaiah's in Isaiah's lower field. Still, it proved nothing, after all, and Isaiah was ever an old croaker—far too ready to put the worst meaning possible on anything he saw or heard. He'd disregard the whole thing until there was something more tangible to disturb him. But that quotation of Isaiah's about water seeking its level *was* disturbing.

"What's the matter, Pa?" said a voice

behind him. "Aint you feeling well? I thought you were going down to see how the hay was coming along?"

Harrison Fay turned and looked up. Beth was standing there in the back door. She was a wonderful young thing—slim, supple, rounded of arm and throat. She was strangely like the freshness of that July morning with its breath of mignonette and newly-cut hay. Harrison felt a sudden lump in his throat as he looked at her. He got to his feet clumsily.

"I'm a-goin' down to the field, Honey," he said. "I'm a-goin' right now. I must be gettin' in my dotage. I got to thinkin' about suthin' and I sorta forgot where I was."

He moved away shufflingly. That platitude of Isaiah's persisted in running through his mind, strive as he would to disregard it.

THE next few days were the most uneasy one's of Harrison Fay's long life. Somehow when he looked into Beth's frank eyes he felt like marching straight over and strangling Isaiah. It gave him a sickening sensation to think he had listened for a moment to Isaiah's croakings.

Yet he fancied at times he intercepted glances freighted with subtle meaning passing between the girl and his hired man; and one evening he saw them talking together very earnestly by the grape-arbor. Dusk was closing in and they did not see him. He tip-toed away with a horrible sinking sensation at the pit of his stomach, his head giddy, and those disturbing words of Isaiah's quotation running like fire through his mind.

It was then that he decided to put Beth to the test. He would tell her that Jim's work wasn't satisfactory, that he was going to turn him off. He would see how she took the news.

He told her that night just before bedtime. Beth's face went a little pale. She began to plead for Jim Wasson, to beg Harrison to keep him a little longer.

"Why, Pa, he's the best worker we've ever had here," she declared. "What are you letting him go for? Don't, please. Keep him. If for nothing else, as a favor to me."

Harrison stumbled up to bed like a stricken man. He fancied he had brought Beth up, he and Abby between them, to know a man when she saw one. This Jim Wasson was a good-looking young devil, it was true, but there were things about him, certain earmarks that any girl brought up as Beth had been should recognize—a certain cheapness of mind and speech and action. Anyone with half an eye could have told that Jim Wasson was no man to pin your faith to. Harrison spent a restless night of it. He was the first one astrir in the household.

Early that afternoon young Steve Remick, who had bought some pasture land of Harrison, came over to make his final payment on it. There was some two hundred dollars, mostly in small bills. Harrison counted them, made out the receipt and stuffed them into a pigeonhole of the old maple secretary in the front room. He would take the money to the bank in Randall in a day or two. He went out into the kitchen. His mind was busy with the problem that had kept him sleepless the night before. What could he say to Beth? How could he tell her what he wanted to tell her? For the first time in her life she seemed to him to be leagues and leagues away from him.

Beth was singing away as she stirred some stewing apples on the stove. Harrison slipped up behind her and drew her to him, just as he often did when he passed through the kitchen.

"You love your old Pap?" he asked quite as usual—only to-day there was not the wonted lightness in his tones.

"Course I do," she made reply according to their private ritual, reaching up to pat his withered cheek.

"You—you—" Harrison's voice was trembling with anxiety, "you aint got nothin' partickerler to tell him, Honey, I s'pose?"

"Tell him?" she laughed lightly. "What have I got to tell him except that I love him?"

"You're sure there aint nothin' else to tell him?" he said, his eyes seeming to beg something of her.

"Why, Pa, what d'ye mean? Why, Pa—"

"Think hard, aint there somethin'

you'd oughta tell him?" he persisted. "Why, no," said she, looking at him in surprise.

Harrison went out, feeling foolish and disappointed and hurt. Of course she wouldn't tell him; yet he realized that he had entertained some vague hope that she was going to disclose to him her true feelings for Jim Wasson.

When he went into the front room that night he found on the secretary the receipt he had written for Steve Remick. Remick had evidently forgotten to take it with him. With a mind to taking a walk in the glowing July twilight and also getting the receipt over to Remick, he picked it up and set off down the road. He stayed longer than he had intended, talking with Remick about sheep, in which that young man was particularly interested.

It was after ten when he returned to the house. He entered quietly and struck a light. Passing through the front room he bethought him to take that two hundred dollars up to his room with him. He opened the secretary. The money was gone. He stood staring blankly at the empty pigeonhole for a moment, then went up the back stairs. Jim Wasson's little room over the kitchen was empty. The closet door was open; his clothes were all gone. The drawers of the pine bureau lay on the bed, pulled out in haste, ransacked and left there.

A sudden fierce joy surged up in Harrison Fay's heart. The two hundred dollars was well invested this way. Let Jim Wasson have it. He mounted the two steps that took him to the second floor of the main house.

"Honey!" he called softly to awaken Beth. "Honey!"

Then the light of his lamp streamed through the open door of Beth's room. Here too were signs of a hasty departure. Her apron and her gingham house dress lay on the rumpled bed; her best dress, her best hat, the little pumps of which she was so fond, were gone.

Harrison found himself down in the front room, his head pillowed on his arms on the open secretary, the lamp burning smokily near by. Tears were streaming down his weatherbeaten cheeks, such bitter tears as he had

never before shed in his life. He was repeating brokenly to himself:

"Its own level! Its own level!"

He said it as if he were trying to force himself to believe something he could not.

Then he arose and locked the secretary.

"I give it to 'em!" he said almost fiercely. "So they can't steal it, not if they want to. I *give* it to 'em, here and now!"

Then he was aware of heavy footsteps in the kitchen. Isaiah came creaking in.

He was like some round-faced, gloating demon as he stood there. Harrison's evident distress seemed as meat and drink to him.

"I see your light burnin' late and run over to see if there was anything I could do for ye, Harrison," he explained. "Marthy see Jim Wasson leggin' it down the road about nine, all togged out, and Beth a-follerin' along, dressed up fit to kill, about a half-hour later. I warned ye, Harrison, what to expect. Water alius, invariable, seeks its own level."

Harrison lifted his twisted face to him. He glared at his visitor savagely.

"Isaiah," he said with great restraint, "if you have a grain of sense left, for pity's sake, get out, and leave me alone."

Isaiah went, mumbling in disgruntled fashion to himself.

IT was days later—just how many Harrison Fay never knew, for he lost count of those wretched days that followed. He sat alone in the front room. The twilight had faded. It was growing dark. Some one came up the front walk and tried the door. After the door had been shaken several times, Harrison got reluctantly out of his chair and opened it. Beth stood there—Beth with rumpled clothes and a wan face. Harrison caught her in his arms, laughing and sobbing all at once.

Then the girl gently disengaged herself and struck a light. Her face was pinched and drawn—so pinched, indeed, that Harrison cried out at the sight of it in the feeble lamplight.

"I've got it," said Beth, tossing a roll of bills onto the secretary. "I followed him and made him give it up. It was

dreadful, the scene we had. Don't ask me about it.

"I've known for a long time who I really am—that I am one of the Brookses over to Westmore, and that you and Ma took me out of the asylum at Randall when I was a little girl. Isaiah told me a long time ago."

Harrison muttered an oath and would have spoken his mind, but the girl held out her hand.

"Jim Wasson—the man who went by that name—is my own brother, Jim Brooks. He told me when he worked at Isaiah's. And I went to the trouble of going over to Westmore and finding out he spoke the truth. I found out a whole lot more, too: that he'd been a ne'er-do-well, like my father—my own father, Peter Brooks—and that he'd done time. He was just out when he came to Isaiah's. I thought he was really trying to make good. That's why I wanted you to keep him here; but he's been stealing the things right along—vegetables from the garden and farming tools—and selling them; and that night, after you'd gone, I found he'd packed up and taken the money. He got the nine-ten train. I had to wait until the ten-three. But I found out where he was and I made him give me back the money—all of it. Only, please don't ask me about it."

She began to weep bitterly. Harrison saw there was an ugly bruise on one smooth cheek. He caught her in his arms.

"Why, Honey," he crooned, "you hadn't oughta done that. I didn't care about the money. It was just you—why, Honey!"

WITH much difficulty Isaiah Phinney squeezed himself through that narrow gate in the dividing fence and came puffing across the garden.

"Marthy tells me Beth's got tired of her contract and come back," he puffed. "Ye're makin' a terrible mistake to take her in, Harrison. Water'll seek its own level, allus and invariable."

Harrison turned with a placid smile.

"You're right, Isaiah, quite right," he agreed. "Only, once in a gre't while—once in a *very* gre't while—in spite of all you've ever heard or learnt about it, it runs *up* hill."

THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

AN ENGLISH ROMANCE

Continued from page 987 of this issue

though he did not know it, Moravia had been like a strong restorative applied at the right moment, and the crisis of his agony had gone by. It was not that he was not still overcome by sorrow, or that moments of complete anguish would not recur, but the current had been diverted from taking a fatal turn, and gradually things would mend.

The perfect, practical common sense of Moravia was so good for him. She was not intellectual like Sabine; she was just a dear, beautiful, kind, ordinary woman, extremely in love with him, but too truly American ever to lose her head, and now in real spirits at the prospect of playing so delightful a game. She was thoroughly versed in the ways of male creatures, and although she possessed none of Sabine's indescribable charm, she had had numbers of admirers and would-be-lovers, and was in every way fitted to cope with any man.

This evening, she had determined so to soothe, flatter and pet Henry, that he should go to bed not realizing that there was any change in himself, but should be in reality completely changed. Her preparations had been swift but elaborate. She had rushed to Madame Imogen's room, and got her to take special messages to the chef, and dinner would be waited on by her own maid—with Nicholas just to run in and open the champagne. Then she selected a ravishing rose-pink chiffon tea gown, all lacy and fresh, and lastly she had a big fire made up and all the curtains drawn, and so she awaited Henry's coming with anticipations of delight. She had even got Mr. Cloudwater (that *père aprivoisé!*) to mix her two dry Martini cocktails, which were ready for her guest.

HENRY knocked at the door exactly at eight o'clock, and she went to meet him with all the air of authority of a mother, and led him into the room,

pushing him gently into the chair she had prepared for him. A man may have a broken heart—but the hurt cannot feel so great when he is surrounded with every comfort and ministered to by a beautiful young woman, who is not only in love with him, but has the nerve to keep her head and not neglect a single point which can be of use in her game.

If she had shown him too much sympathy, if she had only been ultra-refined and silent and adoring, Henry by this time would have been quite as unhappy as he had been at first; but he was too courteous by nature not to try to be polite and appreciative of kindness when she tendered it so frankly, no matter what his inward feelings might be—this she knew she could count upon, and she meant to exploit it.

She made him drink the cocktail, and then she deliberately spoke of Sabine, wondering if she would be awfully surprised to see Michael, and if he would take her back with him to Arranstoun. Henry winced at every word, but he had to answer, and presently he found he did not feel so sad.

Then, with dexterity, she turned the conversation to English politics and got him to explain points to her, and at every moment she poured in insidious flattery and frank, kind affection, so that by the time the ice had come, Henry had begun to feel unaccountably soothed. She was really a beautiful woman and arranged with a wonderful *chic*, and he realized that she had never looked more charming or been so sweet. She had all the sense of power being on her side, now that she had a free hand, unhampered by honor to her friend, and when the dessert and the cigarettes had come, she felt that she might indulge in a little sentiment.

She remembered that he only smoked cigars, and got up and helped him to light one of his own; and when she was

quite close to him, she put her hand out and stroked his hair.

"Even if he does not like it at first," she told herself, "he is too polite to say so, and presently, just because he is a man, it will give him a thrill."

"I do love your light hair, Henry," she said aloud, "and it is so well brushed. You Englishmen are certainly *soigné* creatures, and I like your lazy, easy grace—as though you would never put yourself out for anyone. I can't bear a fuss."

SHE puffed her cigarette and did not wait for him to answer her, but prattled on, perfectly at ease. Even his courtesy would not have prevented him from snubbing her, if she had been the least tentative in her caressings, or the least diffident. But she took it just as a matter of course, and presently it began to give him a sensation of pleasure and rest. If she had, by word or look, suggested that she expected some return, Henry would have frozen at once—but all she did was apparently only to please herself, and so he had no defense to make.

Still in the character of domestic tyrant, she presently led him to the comfortable arm-chair, and once more seated herself upon the stool close to the fire by his side. Here, she was silent for a few moments, letting the comfort of the whole scene sink into his brain—and then, when the maid came in to clear away the dinner-table, she got up and went to the piano, where she played some soft, but not sentimental tunes. Music of a certain sort would be the worst thing for him, but a light waltz while Marie was in the room could do no harm—though, when she went over close to him again, she saw that even this pause had allowed him time to think, and that his face was once more overcome by melancholy, although he greeted her with a smile.

Something further must be done.

"Henry," she said, cooingly, kneeling down beside him and taking his hand, "will you promise me something, please. I am not clever like you, but I do know one splendid recipe for taking away pain: every time the thought of Sabine comes up to you, and the old pictures you

used to hold, look them squarely in the face, and then deliberately replace them with others that you can obtain—the strange law of periodicity will be in motion and, if you have only will enough, gradually the pictures that can be yours will unconsciously have taken the place of the old ones which have caused you pain. Is it not much better to do that than just to let yourself grieve—surely it is more like a man?"

HENRY looked at her, a little startled. This idea had never presented itself to him. Yes, it was certainly more like a man to try any measure than "just to grieve," and what if there should be some truth in this suggestion—what did the "law of periodicity" mean? What an American phrase! How apt they were at coining expressive sentences! He looked into the glowing ashes—there he seemed to see in ruins the whole fabric of his dreams—but if there was a law which brought thoughts back, and back again at the same hour each day, then Moravia was right; he must blot out the old pictures and conjure up new ones—but what could they be?

"You are musing, Henry," Moravia's voice went on. "Are you thinking over what I said? I hope so, and you will find it is true. See, I will tell you what to visualize there in the fire. You are looking at a splendid English home, all peace and warmth, and you see yourself in it, happy and surrounded by friends. And you see yourself a great man, the center of political interest, and everything coming towards you that heart can desire. It is awfully wanting in common sense to think because you cannot obtain one woman there are none others in the world."

"Awfully," agreed Henry—suddenly taking in the attractive picture she made, seated there at his knees, her white hand holding his hand. His thoughts wandered for a moment, as thoughts will do when the mind is overstrained; they wandered to the speculation of why American women should have such small and white hands, and then he brought himself back to the actual conversation.

"You mean to tell me," he said, "that if every time I remember, when I am



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dwelling upon the subject which pains me, that I must make my thoughts turn to other things which give me pleasure, that gradually the new thoughts will banish the old?"

"Of course I mean that," Moravia told him. "Everything comes in cycles; that is why people get into habits. You just try, Henry; you can cure the habit of pain as easily as you can cure any habit. It is all a question of will."

SHE saw that she had created interest in his eyes, and rejoiced. That crisis had passed! and it would be safe to go on.

"I shall not get him to kiss me to-night, after all," she decided to herself. "If I did, he would probably feel annoyed to-morrow, with some ridiculous sense of a too-sudden disloyalty to Sabine's memory—and he might be huffed with himself, too, thinking he had given way; it might wound his vanity. I shall just draw him right out and make him want to kiss me, but not consciously—and then it will be safe when he is at that pitch to let him go off to bed."

This plan she proceeded to put into practice. She exploited the subject they had been talking of to its length, and aroused a sharp discussion and argument—while she took care to place herself in the most alluring attitudes as close to Henry as she possibly could be, while maintaining a basis of frank friendship; and then she changed the current by getting him to explain to her exactly what he had done about Michael, and how they should arrange the meeting between the two, putting into her eagerness all the sparkle that she would have used in collaborating with him over the placing of the presents upon a Christmas tree—until, at last, Henry began to take some sort of pride in the thing himself.

"I want you to let Sabine think you are just going to forgive her for her deception, but intend her to keep her word to you; and then you can take Mr. Arranstoun up to her sitting-room when you have brought him from the Père Anselme's—and just push him in and let them explain matters themselves.

Wont it be a moment for them both!"

Henry writhed.

"Yes," he gasped, "a great moment!"

"And you are not going to care one bit, Henry," Moravia went on, with authority. "I tell you you are not."

Then, having made all clear as to their joint action upon the morrow, she spent the last half-hour before they parted in instilling into his spirit every sort of comfort and subtle flattery until, when the clock struck eleven, Henry felt a sense of regret that he must say good-night.

By this time, her head was within a few inches of his shoulder, and her pretty eyes were gazing into his with the adoring affection of a child.

"You are an absolute darling, Moravia," he murmured, with some emotion, "—the kindest woman in this world." And he bent and kissed her hair.

SHE showed no surprise—to take the caress naturally would, she felt, leave him with the pleasure of it, and arouse no disturbing analyzations in his mind as to its meaning.

"Now you have got to go right off to bed," she said, in a matter-of-fact "mother" tone, "and you'll promise me you will close those eyes and go to sleep." Here she permitted herself softly to shut his lids with her smooth fingers.

Henry felt a delicious sense of comfort and peace creeping over him—he knew he did not wish to leave her—but he got up and took both her hands.

"Good-night, you sweet lady," he said. "You will never know how your kind heart has helped me to-night, nor can I express my gratitude for your spontaneous sympathy,"—with which he kissed the fair hands, and went regretfully towards the door.

Moravia thought this the right moment to show a little further sentiment.

"Good-night, Henry," she faltered. "It has been rather heaven for me—but I don't think I'll let you dine up here alone with me again—it—it might make my heart ache, too." And then she dexterously glided to the door of her bedroom and slipped in, shutting it softly.

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And Henry found himself alone, with some new fire running in his veins.

When Moravia, listening, heard his footsteps going down the passage, she clasped her hands in glee.

"I 'shall never know!' 'My spontaneous sympathy!'—Oh! the darling, innocent babe! But I've won the game. He will belong to me now—and I shall make him happy. Ouida was most certainly right when she said, 'Men are not vicious; they are but children.'"

CHAPTER XXIII

VERY early on Christmas morning, Lord Fordyce went down to the Presbytère and walked with the Père Anselme on his way to mass. He had come to a conclusion during the night. The worthy priest would be the more fitting person to see Michael; he felt he could well leave all explanations in those able hands—and then, when his old friend knew everything, he, Henry, would meet him and bring him to the château of Héronac, and so to Sabine. The Père Anselme was quite willing to undertake this mission.

The wind had got up, and a gloriously rough sea beat itself against the rocks. The thundering surf seemed some comfort to Henry. He was unconscious of the fact that he felt very much better than he had ever imagined he could feel after such a blow. Moravia's manoeuvrings and sweet sympathy had been most effective, and Henry had fallen asleep while her spell was still upon him—and only awakened after several hours of refreshing slumber. Now he left the old priest at the church door and strode away along the rough coast road. He was following Moravia's advice, and replacing each thought of pain as it came, with one of pleasure—and the frosty air exhilarated his blood.

Michael, meanwhile, in the slow, unpleasant train, was a prey to anxiety and speculation. What had happened? There was no clue in Henry's telegram. Had there been some disaster? Was Henry violently angry with him? What would their meeting bring? All night long he had wondered and wondered, as he sat in the corner of his carriage. But what-

ever had happened was a relief—it produced action. He had no longer just to try to kill time and stifle thought.

It seemed as if he would never arrive, as the hours wore on and dawn faded into daylight. Then, at last, the crawling engine drew up at his destination, and he got out and recognized Henry's chauffeur waiting for him on the platform. The swift rush through the frosty air refreshed him, and took away the fatigue of the long night—and soon they had drawn up at the door of the Presbytère, and he found himself being shown by the priest's ancient housekeeper into the spotlessly clean parlor.

The Père Anselme joined him in a moment, and they silently shook hands.

"You are not aware, sir, why you have been sent for, I suppose?" the priest asked, with his mild courtesy. "Pray be seated, and I will endeavor to enlighten you."

THE Père Anselme spread out his thin hands towards the warmth of the stove, while he remained standing opposite his visitor.

"The good God has at last put it into the mind of the Lord Fordyce that our *Dame d'Héronac* has not been altogether happy of late—and upon my suggestion Lord Fordyce questioned her about this, and learned what I believe to be the truth—which you, sir, can corroborate—namely, that you are her husband and are obtaining the divorce not from desire, but from a motive of loyalty to your friend."

"That is the case," assented Michael quietly, a sudden great joy in his heart.

The priest was silent, so Michael went on:

"And what does Lord Fordyce mean to do?—release her and give her back to me—or what, *mon père!*"

"Is it necessary to ask?" And Père Anselme lifted questioning and almost whimsical eyebrows. "Surely you must know that your friend is a gentleman!"

"Yes, I know that—but it must mean the most awful suffering to him—poor, dear old Henry. Is he quite knocked out?"

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But, meanwhile, it will be well that you let me offer you the hospitality of my poor house for rest and refreshment."—here the old man made a courtly bow,—“and when you have eaten and perhaps bathed, you can take the road to the Château of Héronac, where you will find Lord Fordyce by the garden wall, and he will perhaps take you to Madame Sabine. That is as he may think wisest—I believe she is quite unprepared. Of the reception you are likely to receive from her, you are the best judge yourself.”

“It seems too good to be true!” cried Michael, suddenly covering his face with his hands. “We have all been through an awful time, *mon père*.”

“So it would seem. It is not the moment for me to tell you that you drew it all upon yourselves—since the good God has seen fit to restore you to happiness.”

“I drew it upon us,” protested Michael. “You know the whole story, Father?”

The old priest coughed slightly.

“I know most of it, my son. In it, you do not altogether shine—”

Michael got up from his chair, while he clasped his hands forcibly.

“No, indeed, I do not—I know I have been an unspeakable brute—I have not the grain of an excuse to offer. And yet she has forgiven me! Women are certainly angels, are they not, *mon père*?”

The Curé of Héronac sighed gently.

“Angels when they love, and demons when they hate; of an unbalance, but a great charm. It lies with us men to decide the feather-weight which will make the scale go either way with them—to heaven or hell.”

LESS than an hour later, the two men who loved this one woman met just over the causeway, where Henry awaited Michael's coming. It was a difficult moment for them both, but they clasped hands with a few ordinary words. Henry's walk in the wind had strengthened his nerves. For some reason, he was now conscious that he was feeling no acute pain as he had expected that he would do, and that there was even some kind of satisfaction in the thought that,

on this Christmas morning, he was able to bring great happiness to Sabine. He could not help remarking, as they crossed the drawbridge, that Michael looked a most suitable mate for her: he was such a picture of superb health and youth. As they entered the courtyard, Moravia and her little son came out of the main door.

The princess greeted them gaily. She was going to show Girolamo the big waves from the causeway bridge before going on to church; they had a good half-hour. She experienced no surprise at seeing Michael, only asking about his night journey's uncomfortableness, and then she turned to Henry:

“Come and join us there by the high parapet. Henry, as soon as you have taken Mr. Arranstoun up to Sabine. She has not come out of her wing yet; but I know that she is dressed and in her sitting-room.” And smiling merrily, she took Girolamo's little hand and went her way.

There was no sound when the two men reached Sabine's sitting-room door. Henry knocked gently, but no answer came; so he opened it and looked in. Great fires burned in the wide chimneys, and his flowers gave forth sweet scent, but the lady of Héronac was absent, or so it seemed.

“Come in, Michael, and wait,” Henry said; and then, from the embrasure of the far window, they heard a stifled exclamation, and saw that Sabine was indeed there after all, and had risen from the floor, where she had been kneeling by the window-seat looking out upon the waves.

Her face was deadly pale and showed signs of a night's vigil, but when she caught sight of Michael it was as though the sun had emerged from a cloud, so radiant grew her eyes. She stood quite still, waiting until they advanced near to her down the long room, and then she steadied herself against the back of a tall chair.

“Sabine,” Henry said, “I want you to be very happy on this Christmas day, and so I have brought your husband back to you. All those foolish divorce proceedings are going to be stopped, and you and he can settle all your differences together, dear—” Then, as a glad cry



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forced itself from Sabine's lips, his voice broke with emotion. She stretched out her hands to him, and he took one and drew her to Michael, who stood behind him.

Then he took also his old friend's hand, and clasped it upon Sabine's.

"I am not much of a churchman," he said, hoarsely, "but this part of the marriage service is true, I expect: 'Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'" Then he dropped their hands, and turned toward the door.

"Oh! Henry, you are so good to us!" Sabine cried. "No words can say what I feel."

But Lord Fordyce could bear no more—and murmuring some kind of blessing, he got from the room, leaving the two there in the embrasure of the great window gazing into each other's eyes.

As the door shut, Michael spoke at last:

"Sabine—my own!" he whispered, and held out his arms.

WHEN Henry left Sabine's sitting-room, he staggered down the stairs like one blind—the poignant anguish had returned, and the mantle of comfort fell from his shoulders. He was human, after all, and the picture of the rapture on the faces of the two, showing him what he had never obtained, stabbed him like a knife.

He saw Moravia's blue velvet dress in the distance down the road when he left the lodge gates, and he fled into the garden; he must be alone; but she had seen him go, and knew that another crisis had come and that she must conquer this time also. So, apparently only for the gratification of Girolamo, she turned and entered the garden, taking care that Girolamo should see Henry, as she knew the child would run to him. This Girolamo immediately did, and dragged his victim back to his mother in the pavilion which looked out over the sea.

"You know I understand you must want to be alone, dear friend, and I would not have come if I had seen you," she said, tenderly, while she turned and, leaning out, beckoned to the nurse to take Girolamo. Then, allowing her feel-

ings to overcome her judgment, she flung out her arms and seizing Henry's hands, she drew them into her warm, huge muff.

"Henry—I can't help it!" she gasped. "It breaks my heart to see you so cold and white and numb—I want to warm and comfort and love you back to life again!"

At this minute, the sun burst through the scudding clouds, and blazed in upon them from the archway; and it seemed to Henry as if a new vitality rushed into his frozen veins. She was so human and pretty, and young and real. Love for him spoke from her sparkling brown eyes. The ascendancy she had obtained over him on the previous evening returned in a measure; he no longer wanted to get away from her and be alone.

He made some murmuring reply, and did not seek to draw away his hands—but a sudden change of feeling seemed to come over Moravia, for she lowered her head and a deep, pink flush grew in her cheeks.

"What will you think of me, Henry?" she whispered, pulling at his grasp, which grew firmer as she tried to loosen it. "I—" And then she raised her eyes, which were suffused with tears. "Oh! it seems such horrid waste for you to be sick with grief for Sabine, who is happy now—and that only I must grieve—"

MORAVIA'S words and the tears in her fond eyes had a tremendous effect upon Henry. It moved some unknown cloud in his emotions. She too wanted comfort, not he alone—and he could bring it to her and be soothed in return; so he drew her closer and closer to him, and framed her face in his hands.

"Moravia," he said, tenderly, "you shall not grieve, dear child. If you want me, take me, and I will give you all the devotion of true friendship—and, who knows, perhaps we shall find the Indian summer, after all, now that the gates of my fool's paradise are shut."

In the abstract, it was not highly gratifying to a woman's vanity, this declaration! But, as a matter of fact, it was beyond Moravia's wildest hopes. She had not a single doubt in her astute

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American mind that, once she should have the right to the society of Henry,—with her knowledge of the ways of man,—she would soon be able to obliterate all regrets for Sabine, and draw his affections completely to herself.

At this juncture, she showed a stroke of genius.

"Henry," she said, her voice vibrating with profound feeling, "I do want you—more than anything I have ever wanted in my life—and I will make you forget all your hurts and pains—in my arms."

There was certainly nothing left for Lord Fordyce, being a gallant gentleman, to do but to bow his tall head and kiss her—and, to his surprise, he found this duty turn into a pleasure, so that, in a few moments, when they were close together looking out upon the waves through the pavilion's wide windows, he encircled her with his arm. Then he burst into a slow laugh, but though it was cynical, it contained no bitterness.

"Moravia, you are a witch," he told her. "Here is a situation that, described, would read like bathos—and yet it has made us both happy. Half an hour ago, I was wishing I might step over into that foam—and now—"

"And now?" demanded the Princess, standing from him.

"And now I realize that, with the New Year, there may dawn new joys for me. Oh! my dear, if you will be content with what I can give you, let us be married soon and go to India for the rest of the winter."

CHAPTER XXIV

WHEN the first moment of ecstasy in the knowledge that they were indeed given back to each other was over, Michael drew Sabine to the window-seat where she had been crouching only that short while before in silent misery.

"Sweetheart," he entreated, "now you have got to tell me everything—do you understand, Sabine—every single thing from the first moment in the chapel when we made those vows, until now when we are going to keep them. I want to know everything, darling child—all

your thoughts and what you did with your life—and when you hated me and when you loved me—"

They sat down on the velvet cushions and Sabine nestled into his arms.

"It is so difficult, Michael," she cooed. "How can I begin? I was sillier and more ignorant than any other girl of seventeen could possibly be, I think—don't you? Oh! don't let us speak of that part. I only remember that when you kissed me first in the chapel some kind of strange emotion came to me—then I was frightened—"

"But not after a while," he interpolated, something of rapturous triumph in his fond glance, while he caressed and smoothed her hair, as her little head lay against his shoulder. "I thought you had forgiven me before I went to sleep."

"Perhaps I had—I did not know myself; I only knew that there in the gray dawn everything seemed perfectly awful, and horror and terror came upon me again, and I had only one wild impulse to rush away. Surely you can understand—" She paused.

"Go on, sweetheart," he commanded. "I shall not let you off one detail. I love to make you tell me of every single thing—" And he took her hand and played with her wedding ring. Sabine thrilled with happiness.

"Well—you did not wake; and so presently I got into the sitting-room, and at last found the certificate; and just as I was going out of the door onto the balcony, I heard you call my name sleepily. For one second I nearly went back; but I did not, and got safely away and to the hotel!"

"Think of my not waking!" Michael exclaimed. "If only I had—you would never have been allowed to go. It is maddening to remember what that sleep cost; but how did you manage at the hotel?"

"It was after five o'clock, and the side door was open into the yard. Not a soul saw me and I carried out my original plan. I think when I was in the train I had already begun to regret bitterly, but it was too late to go back—and then next day your letter came to me at Mr. Parsons', and all my pride was up in arms!"



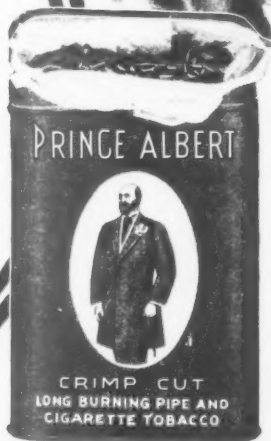
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HERE Michael held her very tight. "Oh, what a brute I was to write that letter," he cried.

"All I wanted then was to go away and forget all about you and everything and have lots of nice clothes and join my friend Moravia in Paris. You see, I was still just a silly, ignorant child. Mr. Parsons got me a good maid who is with me still, and he agreed at last to my taking the name of Howard—I thought if I kept the Arranstoun everyone would know."

"But what did you intend to do, darling, with your life? We were both crazy, of course, you to go—and I to let you."

"I had no concrete idea: just to see the world and buy what I wanted, and sit up late—and not have to obey any rules, I think. And underneath there was a great excitement all the time, in the thought of looking perfectly splendid and being a grand, grown-up lady when you came back—for of course I believed then that we must meet again."

"Well, what changed all that and made you become engaged to Henry, your wicked little thing?" And Michael kissed her fondly. "Was it because I did not come back—but you could have cabled to me at any time."

An enchanting confusion crept over Sabine: she hesitated—she began to speak, then stopped and finally buried her face in his coat.

"What is it, darling," he asked with almost a tone of anxiety in his voice. "Did you have some violent flirtation with some one at this stage? And you think I shall be annoyed? But indeed I shall not, because I do fully realize that whatever you did was my fault for leaving you alone. Tell me, Sabine."

"No—it wasn't that—"

"Well—then?"

"Well—then I was—terrified. It was my old maid Simone who told me what had happened—I was still too ignorant to understand things."

"Told you what? What wretched story did the old woman invent about me?" Michael's eyes were haughty—that she could listen to stories from a maid!

Sabine clasped her hands together—she was deeply moved.

"Oh, Michael—you are stupid! How

can I possibly tell you—if you wont understand?"

SABINE jumped up suddenly and swiftly brought her blue dispatch box from beside her writing-table, and unlocked it with her bracelet key—while Michael with an anxious, puzzled face watched her intently. She sat down again beside him when she had found what she sought, the closed blue leather case which she had looked at so many times.

"If you are going to show me some brute's photograph, I simply refuse to look," Michael said. "All that part of your life is over and we are going to begin afresh, darling one, no matter what you did."

But she crept nearer to him as she opened the case—and her voice was full of sweet, shy tenderness:

"It is not a brute's photograph, Michael; it is the picture of your own little son."

"My God!" cried Michael, the sudden violent emotion making him very pale. "Sabine—how dared you keep this from me all these years? I—" Then he seized her in his arms and for a few seconds they could neither of them speak—his caresses were so fierce. At last he exclaimed brokenly: "Sabine—with the knowledge of this between us, how could you ever have even contemplated belonging to another man? Oh! if I had only known. Where is—my son?"

"You must listen, Michael, to everything," Sabine whispered; "then you will understand. I was simply terrified when I realized at last, and only wanted to go back to you and be comforted, so I wrote a letter at once to tell you, and as Mr. Parsons was in England again I sent it to him to have it put safely into your hands. But by then you had gone off to China and Mr. Parsons sent the letter back to me; it was useless to forward it to you, he said; you might not get it for a year."

Michael strained her to his heart once more, while his eyes grew wet.

"Oh, my poor little girl—all alone, how frightfully cruel it all was! No wonder you hated me then and could not forgive me afterwards."



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Walter Jones

"I did not hate you—I was only terrified, longing to rush off somewhere and hide—so Simone suggested San Francisco, the furthest off she knew, and we hurried over there; and then I was awfully ill, and when my baby was born I very nearly died."

MICHAEL was wordless; he could only kiss her. "That is what made him so delicate—my wretchedness and rushing about," she went on, "and so I was punished, because after three months, God took him back again—my dear little one—just when I was beginning to grow comforted and to love him. He was exactly like you, Michael, with the same blue eyes; and I thought—I thought, we should go back to Arranstoun and finish our estrangements and be happy again—the three of us—when you did come home. I grew radiant and quite well—" Here two big tears gathered in her violet eyes and fell upon Michael's hand, and he shivered with the intensity of his feelings as he held her close.

"We had made our plans to go East—but my little sweetheart caught cold somehow—and then he died. Oh! I can't tell you the grief of it, Michael. I was quite reckless after that—it was in June—and I did not care what happened to me for a long while. I just wanted to get back to Moravia, not knowing she had left Paris for Rome; and then I crossed in July—and came here to Brittany and saw and bought Héronac, as I told you before. I heard then that you had not returned from China or made any sign—and it seemed all so cruel and ruthless, and as there were no longer any ties between us I thought that I would crush you from my life and forget you."

"Oh, my dear, my dear little girl," Michael sighed. "If you knew how all this is cutting me to the heart; to think of the awful brute I have been! to think of you bearing things all alone! Somehow I never realized the possibility of this happening. Once or twice when it did cross my mind, I thought of course you would have cabled to me if it were so. I am simply appalled, now, at the casual selfishness of my behavior. Can you ever forgive me, Sabine?"

She smoothed back his dark, thick hair and looked into his bold eyes, now soft and glistening with tears.

"Of course I can forgive you, Michael. I belong to you, you see—"

SO when he had kissed her enough, in gratitude and contrition he besought her to go on.

"The years passed and I thought I had really forgotten you—and my life grew so peaceful with the Père Anselme and Madame Imogen here at Héronac, and all sorts of wonderful and interesting studies kept developing for me. I seemed to grow up and realize things, and the memory of you grew less and less—but society never held out any attractions for me—only to be with Moravia. I had taken almost a loathing for men; their actions seemed to me all cruel and predatory, not a single one attracted me in the least degree—until this summer at Carlsbad when we met Henry. And he appeared so good and true and kind—and I felt he could lift me to noble things and give me a guiding hand to greatness of purpose in life. I liked him—but I must tell you the truth, Michael, and you will see how small I am." Here she held tightly to Michael's hand. "I do not think I would ever have promised him at Carlsbad that I would try to free myself, only that I read in the paper that you were at Ostend with Daisy Van der Horn. That exasperated me—even though I thought I was absolutely indifferent to you. I had never seen your name in the paper before; it was the first indication I had that you had come home—and the whole thing wounded my pride. I felt that I must ask for my freedom from you before you possibly could ask for yours from me. So I told Henry that very night that I had made up my mind."

"Oh! my dear little goose," Michael interrupted. "Not one of those ladies mattered to me more than the other—they were merely to pass the time of day, of no importance whatever."

"I dare say, but I am telling you my story, Michael. Well, Henry was so wonderful, so good—and it got so that he seemed to mean everything fine; he drew



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me out of myself, and your shadow grew to mean less and less to me, and I believed that I had forgotten you quite—except for the irritation I felt about Daisy; and then by that extraordinary turn of fate, Henry himself brought you here. I did not even know the name of the friend who was coming with him. I saw you both arrive from the lodge, and when I heard the tones of your voice—ah! well, you can imagine what it meant!”

“No, I want to know, little darling—what did it mean?” And Michael looked into her eyes with fond command.

“It made my heart beat and my knees tremble, and a strange thrill came over me. I ought to have known then that to feel like that did not mean indifference—oughtn’t I?”

“I expect so—but what a moment it was when we did meet; you must come to that!”

AT this importunity Sabine looked so sweetly mutinous that he could not remain tranquilly listening for the moment, but had to make love to her, whispering every sort of endearment into her little ear; and presently she continued her story:

“I stood there in the lodge after the shock of seeing you had passed, and I began to burn with every sort of resentment against you. I had had all the suffering and you had gone free—and I just felt I wanted to punish you by pretending not to know you! Think of it! How small—and yet there underneath I felt your old horribly powerful charm!”

“Oh, you did, did you! You darling!” Michael exclaimed. “And what do you suppose I felt—if we had only rushed there and then into each other’s arms!”

“I was quite prepared for you in the garden—and did I not play my part well! You got quite white, you know, with surprise—and I felt exquisitely excited. I could see you had come in all innocence—having probably forgotten our joking arrangement that I should call myself Mrs. Howard. I could not think why you did not speak out and denounce me. It hurt my pride. I thought it was because you wanted to divorce

me and marry Daisy that you were indifferent about it. I did not know it was because you had given your word of honor to Henry not to interfere with the woman he loved. Then after dinner Henry told me you knew that he and I were practically engaged. That stung me deeply; it seemed to prove your indifference. So things developed, and we met in the garden—Michael, was not that a wonderful hour? How we both acted! If you had indicated by word or look that you remembered me, I could not have kept it up; we should have had to tell Henry then—we were playing at cross-purposes and my pride was wounded.”

“I understand, sweetheart; go on.”

“Well, I was miserable at luncheon, and when you went out in the boat—being with you was like some intoxicating drink—I was more excited than I had ever been in my life. I was horrid towards Henry; I would not own it to myself, but I felt him to be the stumbling-block in the way. So I was extra nice to him to convince myself—and I let him hold my arm, which I had never done before, and you saw that in the garden, I suppose—and thought I loved him and so went. That was nice of you, Michael—but stupid, wasn’t it?”

“Ridiculously stupid; everything I did was stupid that separated you from me. The natural action of my character would have been just to seize you again and carry you off, resisting or unresisting, to Arranstoun, but some idiotic old sentiment of honor to Henry held me.”

“I cried a little, I believe, when I got your note—I went up into this room and opened this dispatch box and read your horrid letter again—and I believe I looked into the blue leather case too.” Here she opened it once more—and they both examined it tenderly. “Of course you can’t see anything much in this little photograph—but he really was so like you, Michael; and when I looked at it again after seeing you, I could have sobbed aloud, I wanted you so.

“And now it is all over—isn’t Henry a splendid man? I told him all this yesterday—the Père Anselme had suggested to him to come and ask me for the truth. He behaved nobly—but I did not know

(Continued on fifth following page)

what he intended to do, nor if it were too late to stop the divorce or anything. I was miserable."

"You shall not be so any more—we will go back to Arranstoun at once, darling, and begin a new and glorious life together. From every point of view that is the best thing to be done. We could not possibly go on, all staying here; it would be grotesque; and I am quite determined that I will never leave you again—do you hear, Sabine?" And he turned her face and made her look into his eyes.

"Yes, I hear!—and know that you were always the most masterful creature!"

"Do you want to change me?"

But Sabine let herself be clasped in his arms while she abandoned herself to the deep joy she felt.

"No, Michael—I would not alter you in one little bit; we are neither of us very good or very clever, but I just love you and you love me—and we are mates! There!"

THEY carried out their plans and arrived at Arranstoun Castle a few days later. Michael wired to have everything ready for their reception, and both experienced the most profound emotion when first they entered Michael's sitting-room again.

"There is the picture, darling, that you fell through and—here is Binko waiting to receive and welcome you! Good old Binko!"

The mass of fat wrinkles got up from his basket and condescended, after showing a wild but suppressed joy at the sight of his master, to be re-introduced to his mistress.

"That old dog has been my only confidant about you, Sabine, ever since I came back—he could tell you how frantic I was over the situation—couldn't you, Binko?"

Binko slobbered his acquiescence and then the tea was brought in; Sabine sat down in the very chair she had sat in long ago. She was somewhat taller now, but still her little feet did not reach the ground.

The most ecstatic happiness was permeating them both and it all seemed like a divine dream to be there together and alone. They reconstructed every incident of their first meeting in a fond duet—each supplying a link, and they talked of all their new existence together and what it would mean; and presently Michael drew Sabine towards the chapel, where the lights were all lit.

"Darling," he whispered, "I want to make new vows of love and tenderness to you here, because to-night is our real wedding night—I want you to blot out that other one."

But Sabine moved very close to him as she clung to his arm, and her whole soul was in her eyes as she answered:

"I do not want to forget it. I know very well that I had begun to love you even then. But, Michael—do you remember that undecorated window which you told me had been left so probably for you to embellish as an expiatory offering, because rapine and violence were in the blood? Well, dear love, I think we must put up the most beautiful stained glass together there—in memory of our little son. For we are equally to blame for his brief life and death."

But Michael was too moved to speak, and could only clasp her hand.

T H E E N D

EMPTY POCKETS

A NOVEL OF NEW YORK

Continued from page 864 of this issue

saw that a handsome limousine was waiting at the curb. A footman stood by the door with a linen laprobe folded over his arm. He was democratic enough to be exchanging badinage out of the side of his mouth with the mere driver of a mere taxicab drawn up aft of the limousine.

Suddenly the footman motioned the taxi-man to silence and came to attention. Two women appeared. Hallard at once recognized the elder of them as Mrs. Merithew. He observed instantly that her hair was devoid of auburn. She was laughing delightedly over something. Plainly she knew nothing of her husband's fate. Then he noted that the young woman with Mrs. Merithew had copper-colored hair! Could she have been the—Hallard checked his suspicion instantly, for he recognized her as Muriel Schuyler, the daughter of one of the wealthiest families in New York.

Muriel Schuyler stood high among Hallard's few admirations, especially among the rich. She was young and handsome and full of vivacity, a daring horsewoman, a tireless dancer, opera-goer and frequenter of the theatre, yet she was to be found often among the poor. Hallard had seen her many a time moving through the slums like a saint of all help.

This renewed his suspicion: since she knew the East Side so well, she might have been there with Merithew. Again he banished the thought and with disgust. He must not let himself get so low as to practice his cynicism on so good a girl as Muriel Schuyler. Had she not just come from a charity meeting? Was she not in the company of the dead man's wife?

Yet she was evidently agitated. But this might be due to nothing more than a womanish struggle with Mrs. Merithew, who was urging her to ride home

in the smart Merithew limousine, while Miss Schuyler wanted to ride in the waiting taxicab. Miss Schuyler was used to going about afoot or in taxies, since she went so much among places where her father's motors would have been conspicuous. There was a brief duel of the sort women indulge in when it comes to paying for the carfare or the tea or the matinee tickets. Mrs. Merithew won at last. Miss Schuyler sighed, "Oh, all right!" and went to dismiss the taxi-driver. She paid him liberally enough to get his hat off his head and profuse thanks from his cynical lips; but there was a look of fond regret in his eyes at losing her, and the smile he gave her was more than commercial.

Before the footman could close the door of the limousine upon Miss Schuyler and her triumphant hostess, Hallard pressed forward, lifting his hat:

"Oh, Mrs. Merithew."

"Yes."

"I beg your pardon, but can you?"—he hardly hesitated before he asked the ghoully question—"can you tell me where I could find your husband? It's very important."

"My husband?" She smiled without mirth. She turned to murmur to Miss Schuyler: "A funny question to ask me." She saw that Hallard had overheard, and she bit her hasty lips in regret. She tried to save the day by asking:

"Have you tried his office?" Perry's office had been a joke. It was the one place he could never be found. It was merely a bureau where a few clerks attended to the details of the estates he had inherited, kept his coupons shorn, and provided him with spending money. Hallard said that Merithew was not at his office. Mrs. Merithew next suggested:

"Did you try the Yacht Club, or the Brook, or the Racquet or—" Hallard nodded to each. She confessed her igno-

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rance: "He's not often in town at this time of the year."

"He was in town last night," Hallard persisted.

"Then you know more than I do," said Mrs. Merithew a trifle grimly, and nodded to the footman, who closed the door in spite of Hallard, and trotted round to his place by the chauffeur. The car moved forward and Hallard followed to Fourth Avenue, staring after it with a relapse to pity. He almost spoke his thought aloud:

"Poor woman, a pretty home she's got to go to!"

He was glad that Muriel Schuyler would be with her at the crash of the news.

MERITHEW had not been a good husband, as everybody knew. These merry fellows abroad are apt to be distressing enough at home. Mrs. Merithew's marriage had been a romance, begun in her youth when her girlhood dream came true, and she captured Merry Perry, the young, the handsome, rich, witty, fascinating gallant.

She had been the envy of other women who coveted her treasure. And a treasure he had been for a full honeymoon. He had revealed the passionate devotion and the irresponsible flickerings of a bright bird. Then he had wavered and flown further and further. There were heart-aches and rapturous flights back home, flights abroad together, hunting parties, yacht solitudes and yacht festivals. He was forever in search of entertainment, but he found it more and more away from her. Her heart did not so much break as it filled with infinite little breaks, like Satsuma ware.

She got used to heart cracks, as people do, and sought for diversion where she could find it. Like a queen whose royal consort neglects her for a DuBarry or many of them, she established a little court of her own and conducted a home where respectability and brilliance were pretty well combined. Merry Merithew came and went like any other guest who was asked no questions as to his engagements.

Eventually the Merithews had settled down to that sort of unofficial divorce

which is known as an "understanding." She suffered less and less from his derelictions. She would have said that nothing he could do would grieve her any more; she had been able to laugh at the thought of being asked where he was. But she was to learn how ruthlessly Perry Merithew could still hurt her. All the rest of her life the mention of her very name would recall the disaster of his end.

Henceforth the home she was hurrying to would be one of the tragic landmarks of the town. The grotesque "Seeing New York" wagons would move past her château in Fifth Avenue slowly that the tourists might gape, not at its architecture, but at its tradition.

The twanging barkers would chant their sardonic serenades under her windows, crying one after another, day after day:

"On the right, I draw your atten-shan tew the pala-shil resi-dince of the famis vic-timm of the greatest marder myst'ry of the day—Parry Marithoo, whewse bodee was found on the rewf of a tenement in the dregs of the slums. This tenement will be visited on this and every evening by our spesh-il touring car on our famis tour of the horribill slums; inclooding the warld-famis Bowery, the haunts of Chinatown with its horribill opium dens, Mul'bry Bend, the home of the Black Hand, and all the other terribill sights of the night life of this great and wickid city. Car leaves our offis at twelve o'clock midnight; all incloo-did for the modist sum of one dollar; reduc-shin for parties. The home of Parry Marithoo, ladies and gentlemn, now inhabitid by his widow."

CHAPTER IV

HALLARD remembered that occasional rumors had blown through newspaper offices, whispering that Mrs. Merithew was going to break with Merry Perry. Most recently the correspondent-elect had been a Miss—or was it a Mrs. ?—Aphra Shaler.

Aphra Shaler had been one of the latest to waste Merithew's time and himself. Hallard wondered why he had

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not thought of her the moment he thought of Perry Merithew.

Aphra Shaler was one of the unfailing supply of wrong women that every small town produces, as every small town produces poets, soldiers, financiers and statesmen who smother there or migrate to more crowded opportunities.

When Mr. Gray was writing his *Elegy* in his country churchyard, he devoted his noble regrets solely to "the destiny obscure" of the good, the beautiful and the great who had suffered oblivion: the gem in the unfathomed cave, the flower in the desert, the mute, inglorious Milton, the village Hampden, the blood-guiltless Cromwell.

He might have gone further and found in other of those "narrow cells" the frustrated fumes of base metals, poisonous plants, mute, non-notorious Messalinas, village Pompadours and Lady Hamiltons of limited guilt.

The great cities produce enough depravity for home-consumption, heaven knows; but they attract also the ambitious village Delilahs who are discontented with their local Samsons; who scorn the farmer's homely vices, the hamlet's austere duplicities, and the shoddy profligacies of the smaller cities. They dream of larger opportunities, where talent of one sort or another can prosper to magnificence.

Aphra Shaler was one of these. The daughter of an almost too virtuous father and mother, in a four-corners of Arcadian innocence,—of appearance,—she had turned her father's hair white and got herself driven out of the house before she was sixteen.

Then she obtained a place in a small-town factory, where her smiles manufactured domestic earthquakes successively for laborers, foremen, the superintendent and one of the partners. She found this place too cold for her.

The advancing Napoleonne moved next to a middle-sized city where she flourished exceedingly till a selfish and inconsiderate young married cashier committed, as it were, *hara-kiri* on her doorstep. His suicide was deplored, but when it was found that he had been also an embezzler and had almost emptied a bank vault at Aphra's feet, the heartless

public made the place too hot for her. She was offered a choice between a cosy-corner in jail and a seat in the next train out of town.

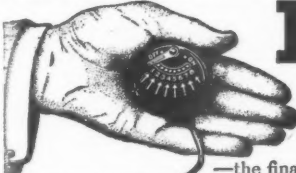
Dazed at the extent of human heartlessness, she drifted to the wicked metropolis as the tiny, prattling brook lapses to the cruel sea. In New York she found competition fierce, but her gifts and her wiles helped her to prosper intermittently, her extravagance being the only check on her commercial importance. She took the cash and let the credit go—also the creditors.

WE are always capable of being amazed to incredulity by the oldest things in the world, such as the fact that sunsets are very red; that violets come out of the black ground along about springtime; that lilies aspire from manure; that the lightning does not strike the unjust, and that women can be very, very wicked without losing their dimples, their ingenuous stares, their infantile peaches-and-cream, their childish laughter or their April tears.

Aphra Shaler was of the type whose fresh young beauty lawyers point out to jurors as proof of innocence. She had thus far escaped appearing before the courts, except in battles with dressmakers, whom she did not believe in paying. But she was constantly on trial before the men whom she pursued while making them think they were paying suit to her.

She had a positive genius for crying at just the right time to just the right extent, for bedewing her cheeks without inflaming her nose. She could ensconce herself in the best corner of a man's heart—even of a good man's heart—like a little worm in an apple blossom, and gradually feeding on his noblest motives, eat her way out and leave a rotten hole in his life.

Warm-hearted gentlemen who had not been brutes enough to despise a distraught girl in an anguish of perplexity, found themselves preyed upon from within and then disgraced to the outer eye. Perhaps it hurts even an apple to be gnawed by a worm, and to feel itself destroyed upon the bough, and to drop from eminence to the slums under the trees.



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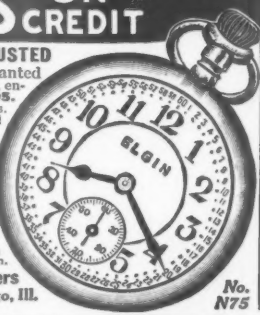
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No. N75

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The world is full of Aphra Shalers, and always has been. They are the loudest bewailers of their own lost virtues, if one can be said to lose what one has never found. They denounce their victims as their conquerors, as no doubt the harpies scolded the very bones of the men who invaded the sanctity of their islands just because the harpies were singing a few little ditties and meaning no harm.

Aphra Shaler always used to tell her next victim how her last victim (who in the telling was always her first victor) had won his way to her very soul with fiendish skill and deserted her with inconceivable treachery. She used to beat her sofa pillow with a fist full of tear-soaked handkerchief, and groan:

"Oh, it's a man's world, I tell you! Nobody cares what a man does! But the woman—one step and she is never forgiven! The man escapes, but the woman pays! and *pays!* and *PAYS!*"

Thus Aphra would declaim, simply clad in the demurest costume obtainable in the Rue de la Paix, in a simply gorgeous little apartment in a simply unmentionable hotel. She was not exactly insincere. She kept honestly forgetting the small private hell she had populated with young men and old who had given her their innocence, their trust, their ardor, their homes, their reputations, their characters, their bank accounts—in one case, life itself.

None of these men dared to blame Aphra. Even in their own hearts they hardly dared to blame Aphra. If they had, they would have laughed themselves to scorn, before the world had a chance. A man must be a good sport, at least, whatever else he is of knave or fool. But the wives of some of the men blamed Aphra, and took their husbands back with a forgiveness that was not at all complimentary—the forgiveness one extends to a blundering imbecile.

FINALLY Aphra had landed Perry Merithew; rather, to hear her explain it: the persistently unfortunate child was so cruelly misjudged by a heartless world that she fell at last into the powers of the arch-roué himself, as Satan finally captures the wretch whom

the minor imps have lured astray.

The fact was that Perry had heard a deal about Aphra, and despised her till he met her. Then he had needed just one look into those limpid eyes, to see what a ewe lamb she was. Truth fairly glowed in that piteous mien, a face like Joan's of Arc in the flames where the perfidious English put her in spite of her saintliness. Merithew had only to hear that unsullied, unsuspecting voice, and clasp that timorous hot hand, to know that Aphra Shaler was the victim of one of the most loathsome conspiracies of slander ever confederated.

Like all men who know the world too well, he had long ago lost all his original illusions and had manufactured still more and bigger illusions to take their place—as we grow hard molar and canine and bicuspid gum-bones when our pretty little milk teeth fall out.

Men of Merithew's experience have known so much wickedness in innocent guise and so much innocence under wicked appearances, that they get quite turned round.

For months before his death Merry Perry had attracted the attention of all New York by his lavish efforts to console the disconsolate Aphra. He kept up costly attempts to make her forget the cruelty of other men in the generosity of one; to cheat her of a tear or charm her to a smile by way of a diamond sunburst or a six-cylinder runabout.

She could weep a new ring out of him in twenty minutes by the clock, and when she pounded the sofa cushion and began her moan, "The woman pays and pays and—" he usually beat her to the third "pays."

Aphra was nearly as convinced as Perry was that she had led a tragic existence and was mere flotsam hurled by the relentless waves of life against the rocky cliffs of a world which would never let a fallen woman prosper. Thus Perry Merithew was kept indecent by his very decency, his chivalry, and his illusions.

And the two of them became a national byword as an atrocious instance of such shamelessness as only a sink of iniquity like New York would tolerate. "Oh, justice of the world!"



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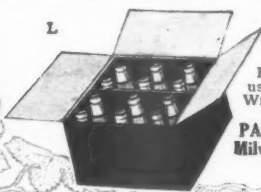
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Perry's intrigue with Aphra was well known to Hallard. He had written Aphra up once or twice before. Whatever his personal opinions, he had never sullied his reportorial pen by calling her any names. Aphra always had the best treatment the press could afford her. Her beauty was advertised in reading matter to an extent that made actresses writhe; her portraits were published with a conspicuousness that spoiled the day for press-agents.

At the moment, Hallard could remember nearly everything about Aphra except the color of her hair. Men ordinarily forget, if they note at all, the pigmentation of their most intimate acquaintances and relations.

Hallard had a queer feeling that Aphra's hair had been yellow once and black another time. "I'm getting old," he groaned to himself. "I've got to cut out the booze."

He called up a few people who would be likely to know where Aphra lived. He finally found a man who knew her latest address; he asked about her hair. The voice came back:

"When I saw her yesterday it was lovely auburn, fairest village of the plain. Why?"

"Much obliged!" said Hallard.

II

OUTSIDE an apartment hotel in the late Forties, Hallard saw a gorgeous six-cylinder runabout loaded with baggage. The ebony telephone operator informed him that Mrs. Shaler was just leaving town and could not see nobody. Hallard went up to her door, and her ebony maid told him the same thing. He walked right in and found Aphra kneeling on the floor and using holy words—she was trying to persuade a suit-case to be a steamer trunk.

While the maid was gazing at him like a mask of onyx and ivory, Hallard knelt on Aphra's suit-case and snapped the catches for her. Aphra stared at him as if he were a genie just bubbled out of a bottle. He stared at her to make sure of that hair. He swore internally; she had on a hat and a motor veil that completely swathed her locks.

She demanded with immediate wrath: "How did you get in here? Who are you, anyway? Whatcha want? I'm in a hurry."

"Don't you remember me?" Hallard asked with infantile surprise. "I wrote a lovely story about you once."

"Oh, didja! Well, I got no time for stories. I'm in a hurry."

But he only grinned and wheedled:

"Sit down and make yourself at home. Take off your hat and have a cup of tea."

He took off his hat, tossed it on a table and dropped into a chair, after removing a paper he found on it.

It almost burned his fingers, for it was the Merithew extra of the *Gazette*. He said nothing, but he felt that he had the reason now for Aphra's flight.

Aphra was not in one of her helpless moods. She rose and handed him his hat with a curt: "Good-by."

Hallard set out his net: "Mrs. Shaler, I'm getting up a Sunday special on the various types of beauty. It's to be a swell thing. I've got several of the best lookers in town. A couple of members of the Four Hundred among 'em. I want your picture to represent the auburn-haired type. Will you give me a photograph before you go?"

He thought he saw a start in her eyes.

"I haven't got auburn hair. I'm an ash blonde."

"Good Lord!" said Hallard. "Since when?"

"For some time."

"But you had auburn hair this morning."

Aphra threw him a quick glance, then answered reluctantly:

"You're another! It was yesterday I changed."

Hallard pleaded: "Are you sure you're not a Titian Venus as usual?"

She snatched out a hatpin, whipped away her hat and veil, and disclosed a massive coiffure of a dull ivory tint, in the shadows almost a pallid mauve.

"Am I auburn or am I ash?" she demanded.

"Ash," Hallard sighed.

She jammed her hat on again, drove the pin home and snapped:

"What's it to you, anyway?"

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The thrust of that pin gave Hallard an idea. The hatpin as a weapon had been very popular of late in melodrama and magazine. Perhaps this very pin had done for Perry Merithew. He wished he had it. He tried to see the design of its head, but her hand covered it now and the veil hid it when it was in place.

"You had auburn hair yesterday?" Hallard persisted.

"In the morning, yes," snapped Aphra. "In the afternoon, no."

"Who dyed it for you?"

"That's my affair."

"How long would it take a bottle of peroxide to do the job if you emptied it on your head?"

"Well, of all the nerve!" she cried.

The maid appeared: "Miss Aphra, yo' cheffoor says if you goin' git to Noo Juzzy befo' sundown you got to take yo' feet in yo' han'."

Aphra seized the suit-case; the maid caught up two others, and they moved to the door. Hallard let the maid go, then intercepted Aphra. He closed the hall door behind him, and said:

"Have you heard that Perry Merithew was murdered last night?"

"No—yes."

"It doesn't seem to grieve you much."

"Why should it? We had a big quarrel yesterday."

"A quarrel, eh? Then you mustn't leave town."

"Oh, mustn't I? Who's to stop me?"

"I'm going to."

Her lip crinkled with angry contempt as she sneered:

"Say! You reporters are doing all the policemen's work, aint you—aren't you?"

"Not quite. But I want you to stay here."

"Got a warrant?"

"No, but—"

"Then you get out of my way, or I'll pin you to that door with this." She put her hand to her hat again.

Hallard wanted to get that pin, but not in the flesh. He had no desire to be found there as victim number two. He opened the door and followed her from the apartment.

Aphra climbed into the car. Hallard was desperate enough to have appealed

to a policeman, but none was in view. He laid his hand on her arm as she settled alongside her chauffeur.

"Answer me one question," he said.

"What?"

"Where were you last night?"

"None of your damned business."

"Where are you going now?"

"The same to you and many of them. Go on."

As the car moved away, she turned to call back:

"Take a tip from me. Look up Muriel Schuyler. He liked her and she had copper-colored wool. Her own, too!"

Hallard sniffed at the suggestion and set it down to jealousy or a desperate ruse to shift the suspicion. He went back to Aphra's apartment to interview the maid. She gave him one glance and slammed the door on his toe. Then he heard a bolt shot, and a mellow voice came through the panels.

"Man, they's no use pesterin' me. I don't know nothin' a tall about nothin' a tall. I'm the know-nothin'est nigro they is. Good day!"

And that was the last word that could be drawn from the wood.


III

STILL Hallard felt that there was excuse enough, from his standards, to justify him in telephoning City Editor Ulery about what he had turned up. He begged Ulery to call up the New Jersey correspondents and set them on Aphra's track. Perhaps they could pick her up at one of the ferry houses as soon as she arrived on the foreign soil of Hoboken, Weehawken or Jersey City.

Ulery promised to take care of that end of the matter. Then he told Hallard that there was a new development. One of the Central Office men had let fall a hint that the job looked like the work of "Red Ida." The word had gone out to bring her in.

Hallard laughed so hard that he hurt Ulery's ear:

"Poor Ida! She's been very useful to the cops. She told me once that whenever they were at a standstill they always picked on her. She says she's been sent up for everybody's crimes but her own.



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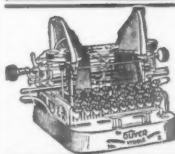
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It's a frame-up. They haven't got anything on that poor little pickpocket."

"Nothing but her copper-colored hair."

"Well, Cleopatra had it too, and I'll bet she's no further away."

"But we know Merithew was robbed," said Ulerly. "His money was all gone; his watch had been taken from the chain; his famous diamond was missing from his finger, and his inevitable black pearl was gone from his necktie—good word, *inevitable*. I'll make a note of it."

This convinced the police and Ulerly, but Hallard's intuition rejected it.

Hallard recurred to a fantastic thought that Merithew had been murdered in some other place and his body transported thither. This was improbable to the maximum degree, seeing that there were at least two rivers far more accessible for the disposition of bodies. And yet it was hardly less likely that Perry Merithew should have been taken there dead than that he should have gone there alive.

Muriel Schuyler, for instance, had gone about in the slums with a little less constraint than she had felt in being alone on Fifth Avenue. Perhaps she had taken Perry Merithew there. She could have persuaded him to go if anyone could. Yet what could have persuaded her to trust herself alone with him? Why should she have robbed him and left him? If some one else killed him, why had she not given the alarm? How could she have had the face to ride with Mrs. Merithew in pretended ignorance?

Yet why had her name been tossed to him by Aphra Shaler?

CHAPTER V

HALLARD was as dissatisfied as a lean wolf on a cold night, finding plenty of spoor to whet his hunger, but reaching a barred door at the end of every trail.

The matter of Aphra Shaler tantalized him. There was so much that was suspicious about her that he began to be less certain of her guilt. He had learned that great lesson of life, to suspect suspicion; to keep it alert and elastic, but never to trust it, never to mistake it for evidence.

And yet he must never dismiss suspicion with contempt. The idlest suspicion was usually based on a complex of experiences. It served with men for what women call intuition. It was contemptibly untrustworthy, and yet it won occasional amazing triumphs.

Why did a woman like Aphra Shaler mention a woman like Muriel Schuyler? Was it the natural jealousy of the foul for the fair? Or had it some specific cause?

Homes like the Schuyler's were so infested with impertinent strangers that they had to put up screens of all sorts. Their reporter-screen was particularly fine of mesh and strong of wire.

Still, a try must always be had. He would buzz around the Schuyler house. It would pique the public appetite to attach another great name to the great name of Merithew. And it was easy enough to lug it in. The courts count a citizen innocent till he or she is proved guilty, but they lock him or her up till they make sure. The newspapers imply guilt till the innocence is proved. An "It is said," or a "There is a rumor," or an "An informant stated" is excuse enough to admit anything to the columns.

Hallard took a Fifth Avenue stage uptown. There were two copper-haired women aboard. People were staring at them curiously. Along the street Hallard saw dozens of copper-heads. He noted that passers-by were nudging one another and turning to stare after them. There would be a great industry in alibi among all these auburn tressed women for the next few days.

He descended from the bus a block below the noble mansion of the Schuylers. Most of the curtains were drawn; the house had apparently been closed up and partially re-opened. A small car stood at the curb.

Hallard had not yet selected a promising device for getting into the presence. Still, he climbed the steps, trusting to his attendant divinity to provide him with a sop for the Cerberus.

The door swung open as he reached for the button. A young man was just being let out. Hallard fell back unnoticed, wondering if the man might be

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some reporter who had preceded him. The small black handbag was reassuring. He was either a piano tuner or a physician. The footman solved the uncertainty. He was saying:

"I hope it's nothing serious, Doctor."

"Oh no, a little too much excitement, that's all. But it's better to have the nurse."

"Yes sir, I always say 'an ounce of prevention'—yes sir, yes, Doctor."

"When she comes, tell her not to wake Miss Muriel if she's asleep."

"Oh, no, sir. No indeed, Doctor."

"Tell her I left instructions with Miss Muriel's maid."

"Yes, doctor; you'll be looking in again soon, wont you?"

"In an hour or two. Good-by."

"Good-by, Doctor."

Without making himself known Hallard let the footman close the door.

THE doctor turned and plodded down the steps to the little car of which he was his own chauffeur. Hallard caught up with him as he was about to get in. "One moment, Doctor, please. I was about to call on Miss Schuyler, but I overheard you say that she was ill. It's nothing serious, is it?"

"Oh no, but she's prostrated with shock. She was with poor Mrs. Merithew when she learned of her husband's death. You knew of that, didn't you?"

"I saw something in one of the papers."

"Muriel—er—Miss Schuyler, was with her when the news came, and Mrs. Merithew clung to her and poured out her grief to her. She took it very hard and the poor girl has such a big heart, that it nearly killed her. She sent for me to help quiet Mrs. Merithew and when I'd done that, I brought Miss Schuyler home. She'll be all right soon, but it was a terrible drain on her strength."

"I don't suppose I'd better call then?"

"I should say not. I've left orders that nobody is to see her, not even her father and mother, till she's better."

"Did she know Mr. Merithew very well?"

"Only casually. He wasn't her type and she wasn't his."

Hallard noted the warmth of this

obiter dictum. He was achingly eager to ask the doctor his name, but before he could phrase the query to his liking, the car had started away. He made note of its number, however, and by telephoning to a friend at police headquarters soon learned that the number belonged to the car of Dr. Clinton Worthing.

Hallard remembered him dimly as a young hospital interne he had met at an accident the year before. It was a strange leap upward from the tail of an ambulance to the post of physician in ordinary to the Schuyler heiress. Hallard's memory of Worthing uncovered other memories. He believed that he had seen the young doctor in Muriel's company somewhere.

Where? When?

II

IT is a serious business being a reporter-detective. When a plain detective knows nothing he can keep quiet, look wise and let his salary work. A reporter-detective on space-rates must go right on reporting.

Hallard resolved once more that his best hope of tracing Perry Merithew's companion was to keep as close to the dead man's own history as possible, and work outward from that.

Hallard used to say that he "knew New York backwards." He spoke truer than he thought. He was forever working from crimes to criminals. He met his people after they had done their worst. It was then too late to realize how well or ill they had meant, or how gradually they had arrived at a crisis that dismayed them as much as the rest of the world. For the man who finds another standing with a smoking revolver over a victim is no more surprised than the man who finds himself in such an attitude. But thereafter it is impossible to study his past without seeing it darkly, as through the red glass of its climax.

Hallard back-trailed Merithew's life till he could have written a biography as full as Boswell's. He followed numberless clues and they led him into numerous labyrinths, up countless blind alleys.



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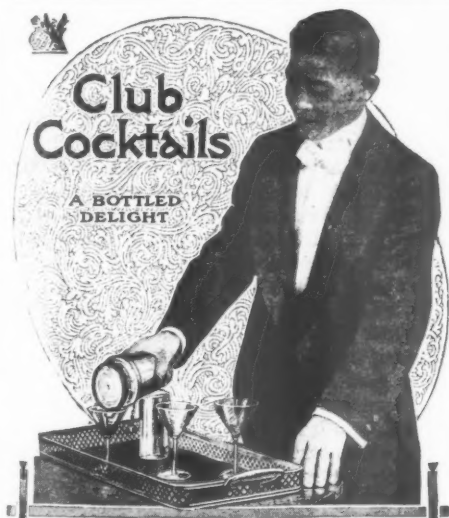
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He finally narrowed his list of copper-haired possibilities down to five young women of such variety of origin, quality, and motive that they had hardly anything in common except the community of traits and interests that make humans human and women women: hunger, desire, fear, vanity and such impulses.

These women came to New York with more or less of innocence and more or less of curiosity.

There was Aphra Shaler, the little pig who brought herself to market: she came down from "up state" and crossed the river on a Forty-second Street ferry. There was Maryla Sokalska, who was born in New York shortly after her parents passed the Statue of Liberty in their flight from the poverty and oppression of Russian Poland. There was Red Ida, who came over the Brooklyn Bridge from Sheepshead Bay, where she was born. There was the young girl who came into the Grand Central terminal with her father and mother from the mid-West, and who ran away from them rather than go back with them. And there was Muriel Schuyler, who like Maryla Sokalska came to New York in the way that humorists declare no one ever comes—by way of being born in New York.

These women learned the city forward through wide young eyes: it thrilled their red young hearts. Perry Merithew thrilled them all with his love of beauty, his flair for happiness, his tender-hearted heartlessness, his cautious recklessness.

Rather than trace the story backward as Hallard did, rather than travel the city under the guidance of a newspaper jade who knew his New York too well, and whose few moments of elation were due to the finding out of depressing things, it were more congenial, surely, to tell the story as time unrolled it—forward, without knowledge of the goal. It is an old device and a creaky, to turn the calendar back for a year, but it saves the reader from acquiring history upside down, and from viewing the gorgeous city through the yellow spectacles of a jaundiced cynic.

Therefore, if you please, it ceases to be the month of July, 1914; it becomes the month of August, 1913.

CHAPTER VI

FOR it was just about a year before Perry Merithew's death that Muriel Schuyler first took note of him. She had heard as much of him as a young girl only recently "come out" was likely to hear of the beau of the preceding generation. She began to go to big dances shortly after he quit going to them.

Like him she came of the original New York stock. The first of her name had come to Manhattan Island before there was a New York, when there was only a Dutch trading post called Nieuw Amsterdam. The Dutch Schuylers grew English and wealthy with the town, and so far as age makes aristocracy, they were aristocratic. So far as aristocracy consists in belonging to a family that has for some time been wearing good clothes, eating choice food, being well cared for and waited on, traveling for pleasure, not being too much worried about money, and associating with people of the same sort, they were aristocratic. Like all aristocrats they had their fields of ignorance, their limitations in things they could afford, their moods of bad manners and wickedness.

Up to this time, Muriel had spent only a little of her life in New York. The town was to her what it was to the masters of the sailing vessels that called it their home-port: it was their place of departure. The family had been driven out of her birthplace on lower Fifth Avenue by the ever-rising tide of trade soon after she had been born there. She trundled her hoop in Washington Square a summer or two and then she was trundled out to the country home; thence she was carried abroad and forgot her American for English, and English for Italian, and Italian for French, according to her mother's residences.

When her mother returned to America, Muriel had to learn her native language all over again.

Her new home faced Central Park and she rode her pony or drove her little side-cart there, or fed the animals peanuts. What time she was not the victim of her governess' determination to fill her curl-curtained head with learning,



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most of her girlhood was spent out of doors at the country home, or in schools abroad.

Always her health and her happiness were the first demands of her parents. They themselves had found life sweet and kept it clean and beautiful. They had known little trouble; they had thought kindly thoughts, been well amused, had eaten good food, tasted always the best wines, worn the best clothes, dwelt gracefully among luxuries. They had kept up their lifelong acquaintance with good horses. Like her mother and her father, Muriel could ride almost any horse almost anywhere, through bog and briar, over fence and water-jumps, in Rotten Row, the Bois, or Central Park. She could run her own car, and her exploits with her motor boat were terrifying to behold. She knew much of dogs and their breeding. She managed her father's kennels, where the famous Schuyler collies were reared. She knew something about cattle and saw to it that her father's famous Holsteins had their teeth brushed and were groomed till they looked like drawings in black and white.

She was a good fellow among the young men and entirely too busy to fall in love. Such flirtations as she had indulged in were hardly more than experiments in comradeship.

She had known as little of sorrow or poverty, of toil or love or vice or crime, as a girl could know who has eyes and ears and can read or listen. She had never encountered death or despair or passion.

The longer such knowledge is delayed, the more likely it is to come in avalanches when it starts to come. She knew far less of the wrong side of the world at twenty than Red Ida had known at ten. She poised on the threshold of life, peering into the dark and haunted house.

And now in August of the year of 1913 she was just "running into" New York with her father because the old boy was childishly eager to have her with him when he inspected the latest addition to his princely collection: the complete library accumulated in Northmarch Castle by the Dukes of Bray. As soon as Jacob Schuyler had heard that the

collection was to be sold, he had cabled the men who kept him informed of the big doings in the international book-market: "Buy me it." The dealers sent back a price that crackled on the cables. He retorted by wire: "Buy me it." They had bought him it.

The loot had arrived at the port of New York a week before. Schuyler's private librarian had eased it through the customs, unpacked and arranged the books in colonies by subjects, and then telegraphed old Schuyler that his treasure was ready for his inspection.

As usual in August, the eastern seaboard was cowering under a hot wave and New York was in the throes of it, but Schuyler would not wait for cooler weather. He must see his new books, "the old boy's new toys," as Muriel called them.

She came in with him on his yacht. As they were skirting the Long Island coast they made out dead ahead a mighty pother in the waters of the Sound.

"It's a motor boat," Muriel cried.

It rose from the water like a dragon-fly and stormed past them overhead.

"It's an airship," she amended.

It was both. The sailing master informed them that it was Mr. Merithew's new hydroplane.

Schuyler stared at it and smiled: "It's the first time anybody ever looked up to Perry Merithew."

"Is he so bad?" Muriel queried.

"He's a scandal to his name: a thorn in his father's flesh and a beast to his wife."

"He's not afraid, anyway," Muriel interposed. "He risks his life lightly."

"He's not risking an article of any particular value," Schuyler growled.

"I like to see a man that's not afraid of anything," Muriel pondered aloud, her eyes still on the dragon-fly.

"The less you see of Perry Merithew the better I'll like it," her father muttered.

This was enough to make the man fascinating even to a girl like Muriel—especially to a girl like Muriel, with a mind of her own and a curiosity for people and things. She did not forget Merithew when he vanished like a dragon-fly into the sunlight.



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II

MURIEL'S father forgot Merithew at once, however, and beckoned his secretary:

"You might wire the office and see if there's any reason for me to come down to-day. It's pretty hot."

The secretary went to the wireless operator and the mast began to sputter and snap. Later the secretary returned to say:

"The office telephoned the wireless station that the President of the Board of the T. M. and K. railway is in town and would like to see you, sir."

Schuyler sighed: "Oh, all right. Tell him I'll run down soon as we land."

The snapping sparks at the masthead told the office that. The yacht, like a duchess out shopping, picked its way down the crowded water street through Hell-Gate and past the doleful islands of Randall, Ward, and Blackwell, under the bridge and over the tunnels, till eventually it reached the New York Yacht Club's landing-float at the eastern foot of Twenty-third Street. The yacht club's station was the most modest member of the structures clustered thereabouts: the old moored ship, the "Deep Sea Hotel," a training-ship or two, a free public bath, a shelter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and a recreation pier where mothers can sit all day in the cool moist breezes and lifting their eyes from their sewing, watch their infants play, and see the promenade of the river-traffic. There also a city-paid band pours out a not too classical program now and then, and in the evenings there are nooks where the vitally important industry of romance furnishes the raw material for the dangerous laboratory of matrimony.

Muriel liked to see these places and the majestic hospitals that dignify the water front. They certified that the poor of New York were abundantly cared for and very happy and contented—or ought to be.

One of her father's touring cars was waiting at the dock. She expected to ride down to his office with him, but he said that the sun was too hot and the journey too long for her. He insisted

on making the trip in a taxicab and sending her home in the car.

Like an eager child on Christmas morning he made her promise not to look at the new books till he could enter the library with her.

Muriel flung him a kiss of farewell and hopped into the seat by the chauffeur, with whom she chatted in a care-free forenoon mood. Jacques Parny adored her; for she spoke his French like a Parisienne, and she knew nearly as much as he did about machinery.

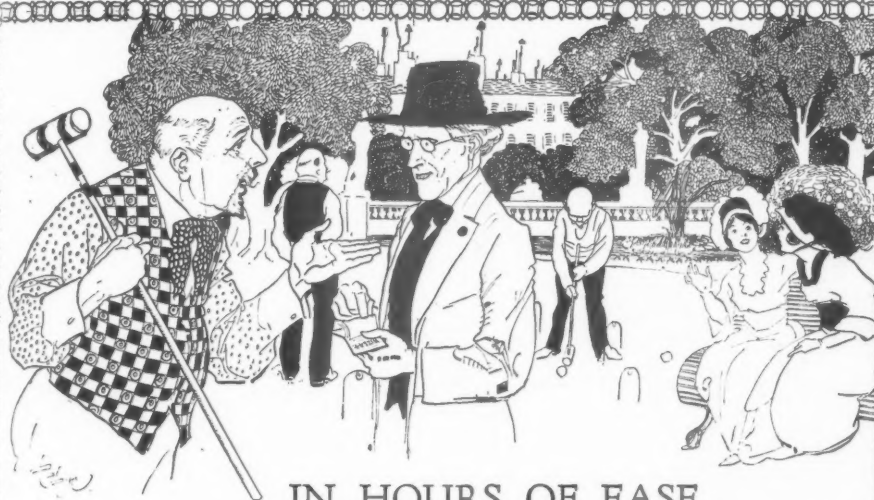
For all the beauty of her face, for all the opulence of her copper-colored hair, her heart belonged rather to a wholesome boy, than to a young woman of romantic capabilities.

ON all the streets of the middle East Side the school-free children were bouncing about like popcorn on a hot skillet. Particularly lively they were in the "Gas-house District" which Muriel was traversing. On First Avenue it was almost impossible to steer the car. The chauffeur turned off into a less cluttered side-street. There were children here too, but he quickened his speed to pass a lumbering express-truck.

From behind it leaped a little boy. He was poor and scrawny and a cripple. He was playing the favorite game of the New York streets. Mysteriously, the boys call it "cat." You lay a short stick on the pavement, tap it sharply with a longer stick; it flies into the air; then you hit at it with your bat, and if you are lucky you can score a run to the lamppost and back, before the "cat" is fielded in. But you must act quickly and keep one eye in the back of your head, for the streets are full of danger.

The cripple, after waiting for the express wagon to pass, had knocked a beautiful fly through the hostile lines. The fielders let out the terrific screech of New York boyhood as he dashed for the lamppost: though "dashed" is the word only for his triumphant spirit; his gait was slow and contorted.

Muriel's car caught him in the air as if it were the club of a giant batsman; it sent him sprawling into space and then slithering shapelessly till the curbstone checked him.



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The car came to a stop as Muriel's scream brought the women to the windows and all along the block. Her voice was a different noise in the familiar clamor of their street. Immediately people began to run and jabber and gesticulate with menace.

The chauffeur turned to Muriel and spoke hastily in French: "There is no policeman in sight, Miss; shall I make a run for it?" Muriel was tempted almost beyond resistance, but she shook her head. A glimpse at the pitiful heap on the ground denied her the right to escape.

She was about to get down and pick him up when a cobble-stone struck the car, splintering the glass of the wind-

shield. A moment later another stone was flung. This one hit Muriel in the forehead. A mob was gathering to demand revenge.

Muriel had run into life. She was going to know New York. In this round about way she was going to make the acquaintance of Perry Merithew. She was going to learn the importance of empty pockets that seem full, but prove empty when a too great need arises; of pockets that are empty because they leak gold faster than amiable fairies can replenish them; and of pockets that are empty because the coppers that drip into them must be clutched out instantly to bribe a little longer delay from the bailiffs of ill fortune.

The next installment of "Empty Pockets" will be in the October Red Book, which will appear on the news-stands September 23rd. Inasmuch as the demand for our October issue probably will exceed that of any other magazine on the stands, it will be wise to get your copy early; or, better still, to order it in advance.

GOD'S COUNTRY—AND THE WOMAN

A SPLENDID NOVEL OF THE NORTH

Continued from page 940 of this issue.

danger with which, for some inconceivable reason, they dared not acquaint him?

In the short time he had known him, a strange feeling for John Adare had found a place in Philip's heart. It was more than friendship, more than the feeling which his supposed relationship might have roused. This big hearted, tender, rumbling-voiced giant of a man he had grown to love. And he found himself struggling blindly now to keep from him what the others were trying to conceal, for he knew that John Adare's heart would crumble down like a pile of dust if he knew the truth. He was thinking of the baby, and it seemed as if his thoughts flashed to the other.

Adare was laughing softly in his beard.

"You should have seen the kid last night, Philip. When they woke 'im, he stared at me for a time as though I was an ogre; then he grinned, kicked me, and grabbed my whiskers! I've just one fault to find. I wish he was a dozen instead of one. The little rascal! I wonder if he is awake?"

He half rose, as if about to investigate, then resealed himself.

"Guess I'd better not take a chance of waking him," he reflected. "If Jean should catch me rousing Josephine or the baby he'd be likely to decide it was his duty to throttle me."

"Jean is—a sort of guardian," ventured Philip.

"More than that. Sometimes I think he is a spirit," said Adare impressively. "I have known him for twenty years.



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THE OCTOBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE

ON ALL NEWS-STANDS, SEPTEMBER 23rd

Since the day Josephine was born he has been her watch-dog. He came in the heart of a great storm, years and years ago, nearly dead from cold and hunger. He never went away, and he has talked but little about himself. See—"

Adare went to a shelf and returned with a bundle of manuscript.

"Jean gave me the idea for this," he went on. "There are two hundred and eighty pages here. I call it 'The Aristocracy of the North.' It is true—and it is wonderful!

"You have seen a spring or New Year's gathering of the forest people at a Company's post—the crowd of Indians, half-breeds and whites who follow the trap-lines? And would you guess that in that average foregathering of the wilderness people, there is better blood than you could find in a crowded ball-room of New York's millionaires? It is true. I have given fish to hungry half-breeds in whose veins flows the blood of royalty. I have eaten with Indian women whose lineage reaches back to names that were mighty before the first Astors and the first Vanderbilts were born. The descendant of a king has hunted me caribou meat at two cents a pound. In a smoke-blackened tepee over beyond the Gray Loon waterway, there lives a girl with hair and eyes as black as a raven's wing, who could go to Paris tomorrow and say 'I am the descendant of a queen,' and prove it. And so it is all over the Northland.

"I have hunted down many curious facts, and I have them here in my manuscript. The world cannot sneer at me, for records have been kept almost since the day away back in the seventeenth century when Prince Rupert landed with his first shipload of gentlemen adventurers. They intermarried with our splendid Crees—those first wanderers from the best families of Europe. They formed the English-Cree half-breed. Prince Rupert himself had five children that can be traced to him. Le Chevalier Gosselier had nine. And so it went on for a hundred years, the best blood in England giving birth to a new race among the Crees, and the best of France sowing new generations among the

Chippewyans on their way up from Quebec.

"And for another hundred years and more, the English-Cree half-breed and the French-Chippewyan half-breed have been meeting and intermarrying, forming the 'Blood,' until in all the Northland, scarce a man or a woman cannot call back to names that have long become dust in history.

"From the blood of some mighty king of France—of some splendid queen—has come Jean Croisset. I have always felt that, and yet I can trace him no farther than a hundred years back, to the quarter-strain wife of the white factor at Monsoon. Jean has lost interest in himself now—since his wife died three years ago. Has Josephine told you of her?"

"Very little," said Philip.

The flush of enthusiasm faded from Adare's eyes. It was replaced by a look of grief, deep and sincere.

"Iowaka's death was the first great blow that came to Adare House," he said gently. "For nine years they were man and wife lovers. God's pity they had no children. She was French—with a velvety touch of the Cree, lovable as the wild flowers from which she took her name. Since she went, Jean has lived in a dream. He says that she is constantly with him, and that often he hears her voice. I am glad of that. It is wonderful to possess that kind of a love, Philip!—the love that lives like a fresh flower after death and darkness. And we have it—you and I."

Philip murmured softly that it was so. He felt that it was dangerous to tread upon the ground which Adare was following. In these moments, when this great, bent-shouldered giant's heart lay like an open book before him, he was not sure of himself. The other's unbounded faith, his happiness, the idyllic fullness of his world as he found it, were things which added to the heaviness and fear at Philip's heart instead of filling him with similar emotions. Of these things he was not a part. A voice kept whispering to him with maddening insistence that he was a fraud. One by one, John Adare was unlocking for him



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hallowed pictures in which Jean had told him that he could never share possession. His desire to see Josephine again was almost feverish, and filled him with a restlessness which he knew he must hide from Adare. So when Adare's eyes rested upon him in a moment's silence, he said:

"Last night, Jean and I were standing beside her grave. It seemed then as though he would have been happier if he had lain near her—under the cross."

"You are wrong," said Adare quickly. "Death is beautiful when there is a perfect love. If my Miriam should die, it would mean that she had simply gone from my *sight*. In return for that loss, her hand would reach down to me from Heaven, as Iowaka reaches down to Jean. I love life. My heart would break if she should go. But it would be replaced by something almost like another soul. For it must be wonderful to be over-watched by an angel."

He rose and went to the window; and with a queer thickening in his throat Philip stared at Adare's broad back. Philip thought he saw a moment's quiver of the shoulders. Adare stared from the window for a moment. When he turned his voice had changed.

"Winter brings close to our doors the one unpleasant feature of this country," he said, turning to light a second cigar. "Thirty-five miles to the north and west of us, there is what the Indians call Muchemunito Nek—the Devil's Nest. It's a free trader's house. A man down in Montreal by the name of Lang owns a string of them, and his agent over at the Devil's Nest is a scoundrel of the first water. His name is Thoreau. There are a score of half-breeds and whites in his crowd, and not a one of them with an honest hair in his head. It's the one criminal rendezvous I know of in all this north country. Bad Indians who have lost credit at the Hudson's Bay Company's posts go to Thoreau's. Whites and half-breeds who have broken the laws are harbored there. A dozen trappers are murdered each winter for their furs, and the assassins are among Thoreau's men. One of these days there is

going to be a big clean-up. Meanwhile, they are unpleasant company. There is a deep swamp between our house and Thoreau's, so that during the open-water seasons it means we are a hundred miles away from them by canoe. When winter comes, we are only thirty-five miles, as the sledge-dogs run. I don't like it. You can snowshoe the distance in a few hours."

"I know of such a place far to the west," replied Philip. "Both the Hudson's Bay Company and Reveillon Frères have threatened to put it out of business, but it still remains. Perhaps that place is owned by this same fellow Lang."

He had joined Adare at the window. The next moment both men were staring at the same object in a mutual surprise. Into the white snow-space between the house and the forest there had walked swiftly the slim, red-clad figure of Josephine, her face turned to the forest, her hair falling in a long braid down her back.

The master of Adare chuckled exultantly.

"There goes our little Red Riding Hood!" he rumbled. "She beat us after all, Philip. I'll bet she is going after the dogs!"

Philip's heart was beating wildly. A better opportunity for seeing Josephine alone could not have come to him. He feared that his voice might betray him as he laid a hand on Adare's arm.

"If you will excuse me I will join her," he said. "I know it doesn't seem just right to tear off in this way, but—you see—"

Adare interrupted him with one of his booming laughs.

"Go, my lad. I understand. If it was Miriam instead of Mignonne running away like that, John Adare wouldn't be waiting this long!"

Philip turned and left the room, every pulse in his body throbbing with an excitement roused by the knowledge that the hour had come when Josephine would give herself to him forever, or doom him to that hopelessness for which Jean Croisset had told him to prepare himself.



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CHAPTER XIV

IN his eagerness to join Josephine,

Philip had reached the outer door before it occurred to him that he was without hat or coat and had on only a pair of indoor moccasin slippers. He would still have gone on regardless of this utter incongruity of dress had he not known that John Adare would see him through the window. He partly opened the hall door and looked out. Josephine was halfway to the forest. He turned swiftly back to his room, threw on a coat, put his moccasins on over the soft caribou-skin slippers, caught up his cap, and hurried back to the door. Josephine had disappeared into the edge of the forest. He held himself to a walk until he reached the cover of the spruce, but no sooner was he beyond Adare's vision than he began to run. Three or four hundred yards in the forest he overtook Josephine.

He had come up silently in the soft snow, and she turned, a little startled, when he called her name.

"You, Philip!" she exclaimed, the color deepening quickly in her cheeks. "I thought you were with Father in the big room."

She had never looked lovelier to him. From the top of her hooded head to the hem of her short skirt she was dressed in a soft and richly glowing red. Her eyes shone gloriously this morning, and about her mouth there was a tenderness and a sweetness which had not been there the night before. The lines that told of her strain and grief were gone. She seemed like a different Josephine now, confessing in this first thrilling moment of their meeting that she too had been living in the memory of what had passed between them a few hours before. And yet in the gentle welcome of her smile there was a mingling of sadness and of pathos that tempered Philip's joy as he came to her and took her hands.

"My Josephine," he cried softly.

She did not move as he bent down. Again he felt the warm, sweet thrill of her lips. He would have kissed her again, have clasped her close in his

arms, but she drew away from him gently.

"I am glad you saw me—and followed, Philip," she said, her clear, beautiful eyes meeting his. "It is a wonderful thing that has happened to us. And we must talk about it. We must understand. I was on my way to the pack. Will you come?"

She offered him her hand, so childishly confident, so free of her old restraint now, that he took it without a word and fell in at her side. He had rushed to her tumultuously. On his lips had been a hundred things that he had wanted to say. He had meant to claim her in the full ardor of his love—and now, quietly, without effort, she had worked a wonderful change in him. It was as if their experience had not happened yesterday, but yesteryear; and the calm, sweet yielding of her lips to him again, the warm pressure of her hand, the illimitable faith in him that shone in her eyes, filled him with emotions which for a space made him speechless. It was as if some wonderful spirit had come to them while they slept, so that now there was no necessity for explanation or speech. In all the fullness of her splendid womanhood Josephine had accepted his love, and had given him her own in return. Every fiber in his being told him that this was so. And yet she had uttered no word of love, and he had spoken none of the things that had been burning in his soul.

They had gone but a few steps when Josephine paused close to the fallen trunk of a huge cedar. With her mittened hands she brushed off the snow, seated herself, and motioned Philip to sit beside her.

"Let us talk here," she said. And then she asked, a little anxiously: "You left my father believing in you—in us?"

"Fully," replied Philip. He took her face between his two hands and turned it up to him. Her fingers clasped his arms. But they made no effort to pull down the hands that held her eyes looking straight into his own.

"He believes in us," he repeated. "And you, Josephine, you love me?"

He saw the tremulous forming of a

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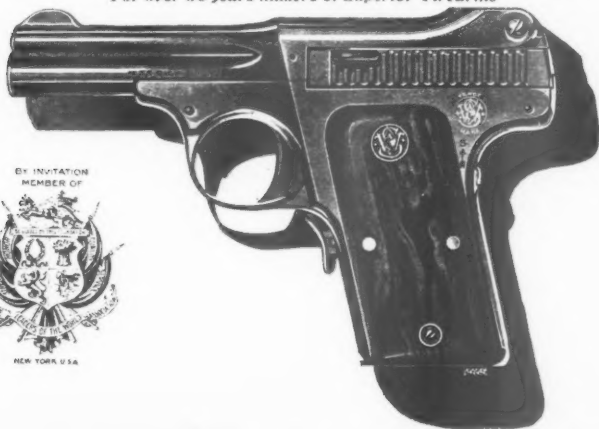
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word on her lips, but she did not speak. A deeper glow came into her eyes. Gently her fingers crept to his wrists, and she took down his hands from her face, and drew him to the seat at her side.

"Yes, Philip," she said then, in a voice so low and calm that it roused a new sense of fear in him. "There can be no sin in telling you that—after last night. For we understand each other now. It has filled me with a strange happiness. Do you remember what you said to me in the canoe? It was this: 'In spite of all that may happen I will receive more than all else in the world could give me. For I will have known you, and you will be my salvation.' Those words have been ringing in my heart night and day. They are there now. And I understand them; I understand you. Hasn't some one said that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? Yes, it is a thousand times better. The love that is lost is often the love that is sweetest and purest, and leads you nearest Heaven. Such is Jean's love for his lost wife. Such must be your love for me. And when you are gone, my life will still be filled with the happiness which no grief can destroy. I did not know these things—until last night. I did not know what it meant to love as Jean must love. I do now. And it will be my salvation up in these big forests, just as you have said that it will be yours down in that other world to which you will go."

HE had listened to her like one stricken by a sudden grief. He understood her, even before she had finished, and his voice came in a sudden broken cry of protest and of pain.

"Then you mean—that after this—you will still send me away? After last night? It is impossible! You have told me, and it makes no difference, except to make me love you more. Become my wife. We can be married secretly, and no one will ever know. My God, you cannot drive me away now, Josephine! It is not justice. If you love me—it is a crime!"

In the fierceness of his appeal he did not notice how his words were driving

the color from her face. Still she answered him calmly, in her voice a strange tenderness. Strong in her faith in him, she put her hands to his shoulders, and looked into his eyes.

"Have you forgotten?" she asked gently. "Have you forgotten all that you promised, and all that I told you? There has been no change since then—no change that frees me. There can be no change. I love you, Philip. Is that not more than you expected? If one can give one's soul away, I give mine to you. It is yours for all eternity. Is it not enough? Will you throw that away—because—my body—is not free?"

Her voice broke in a dry sob; but she still looked into his eyes, waiting for him to answer—for the soul of him to ring true. And he knew what must be. His hands lay clenched between them. Jean seemed to rise up before him again at the gravesides, and from his lips he forced the words:

"Then there is something more—than the baby?"

"Yes," she replied, and dropped her hands from his shoulders. "There is that of which I warned you—something which you could not know if you lived a thousand years."

He caught her to him now, so close that his breath swept her face.

"Josephine, if it was the baby alone, you would give yourself to me? You would be my wife?"

"Yes."

Strength leaped back into him, the strength that made her love him. He freed her and stood back from the log, his face ablaze with its old fighting spirit. He laughed, and held out his arms without taking her.

"Then you have not killed my hope!" he cried.

His enthusiasm, the strength and sureness of him as he stood before her, sent the flush back into her own face. She rose, and reached to one of his outstretched hands with her own.

"You must hope for nothing more than I have given you," she said. "A month from to-day you will leave Adare House. And when you leave, you will never return."

(Continued on fifth following page)

"A month!" He breathed the words as if in a dream.

"Yes, a month from to-day. You will go off on a snowshoe journey. You will never return, and they will think that you died in the deep snows. You have promised me this. And you will not fail me?"

"What I have promised I will do," he replied, and his voice was now as calm as her own. "And for this one month—you are mine!"

"To love as I have given you love, yes."

For a moment he folded her in his arms; and then he drew back her hood so that he might lay a hand on her shining hair, and his eyes were filled with a wonderful illumination as he looked into her upturned face.

"A month is a long time, my Josephine," he whispered. "And after that month there are other months—years and years of them, and through years, if it must be, my hope will live. You cannot destroy it, and some day, somewhere, you will send word to me. Will you promise to do that?"

"If such a thing becomes possible, yes."

"Then I am satisfied," he said. "I am going to fight for you, Josephine. No man ever fought for a woman as I am going to fight for you. I don't

know what this strange thing is that separates us. But I can think of nothing terrible enough to frighten me. I am going to fight, mentally and physically, day and night—until you are my own. I cannot lose you now. That will be what God never meant to be. I shall keep all my promises to you. You have given me a month, and much can happen in that time. If at the end of the month I have failed—I will go. But you will not send me away. For I shall win!"

So sure was he, so filled with the conviction of his final triumph, so like a god to her in this moment of his greatest strength, that Josephine drew slowly away from him, her breath coming quickly, her eyes filled with the star-like pride and glory of the Woman who has found a Master. For a moment they stood facing each other in the white stillness of the forest, and in that moment there came to them the low and mourning wail of a dog beyond them. And then the full voice of the pack burst through the wilderness, a music that was wild and savage, and yet through which there ran a strange and plaintive note for Josephine.

"They have caught us in the wind," she said, holding out her hand to him. "Come, Philip. I want you to love my beasts."

The next installment of "God's Country—and the Woman" will be in the October Red Book. It will appear on the news-stands, September 23rd. With a magazine growing as rapidly as the Red Book is growing, the only way to be sure of getting your copy is to get there early—or order it in advance.

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